

Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

Sue Slipman Women in Education and
the Student Movement

Terry Bushell Thoughts on Leisure and Sport
Part I Leisure

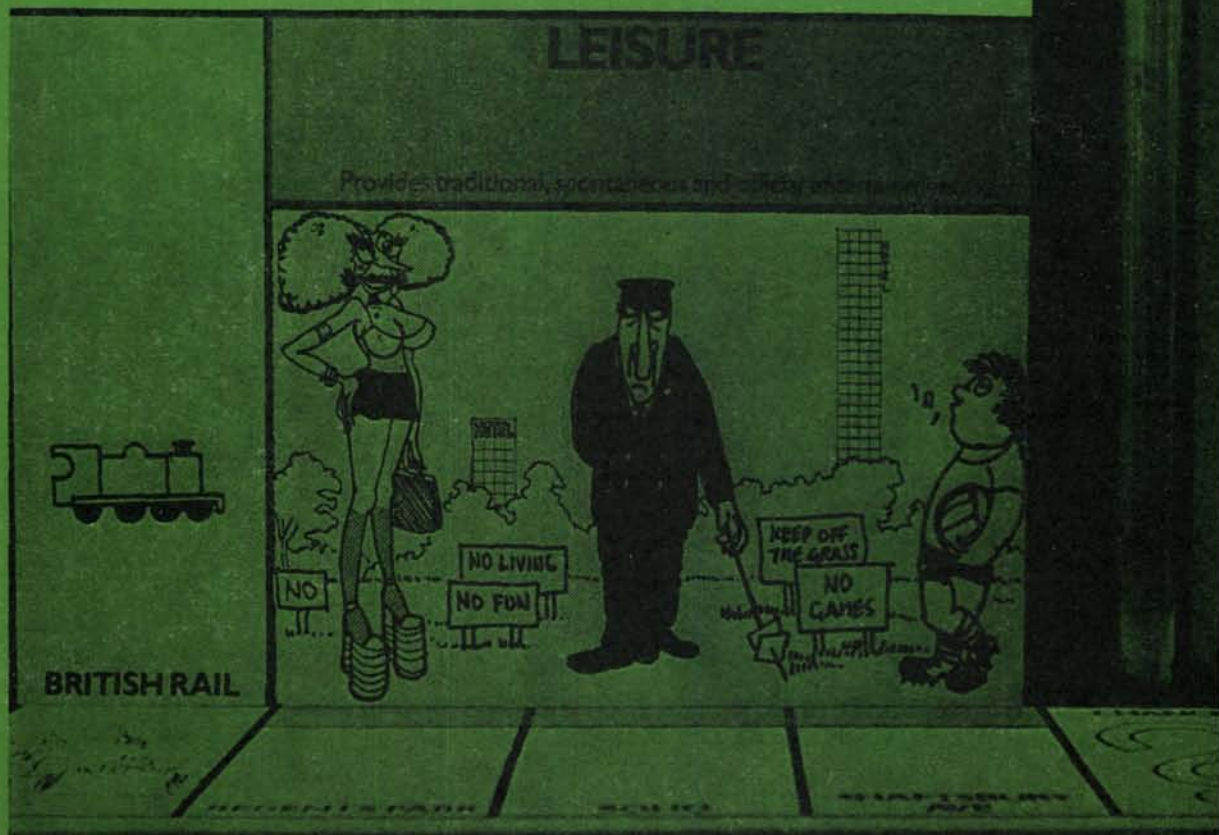
Review Article:

Alan Hunt

Marxism and Modern Social Theory

Document:

Political Report of the Egyptian
Communist Party



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Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 19, Number 12

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The front cover was designed by Pat Cook

The Cover Design

The drawing on the front cover was part of a game—on the lines of Monopoly—exhibited at the London Exhibition in the Flower Market, Covent Garden. The game, called Metropoly, shows the burdens carried by the people of the capital. The aim of the show was intended to demonstrate "a belief that the means by which change takes place has become too remote from the needs of the people". The Exhibition was devised by the London Region of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The photograph was provided by the *Morning Star*.

Editorial Comments

INTENSIFIED repression, terror, the slaughter of innocent people by bombing and sectarian assassination, have been "normal" features of life in Northern Ireland for some six years now.

And the bi-partisan policies of the leaders of both Labour and Tory parties, if continued, could well mean that the carnage could continue for years longer. For these policies are bankrupt, since they avoid the only real solution like the plague, namely the establishment of genuine democratic rights for all the people in the "statelet". This above all could lay the basis for ending the sectarian divisions amongst the working people so advantageous to native capitalist and foreign, especially British, imperialism.

The need for a completely new policy of this kind, which is in the interests not only of the people of Northern Ireland, but equally of the British people, is splendidly outlined in the latest Communist party pamphlet, written by Irene Brennan¹.

This is a veritable Plain Person's Guide to the Northern Ireland situation, full of facts about the living face of discrimination there, what it means in terms of employment, housing, education, social services, the different elements comprising both the Republican and Unionist movements, the role and record of the British Army.

The "British Connexion" is emphasised throughout. Ireland was the oldest British Colony. The establishment of the Northern Ireland statelet was enacted by the British Parliament which still controls economic and political development there. But more immediately, the methods used by British Governments to deal with the situation open up sinister possibilities for the British people:

"Northern Ireland is being used by the Army as a training ground in so-called counter-insurgency; the techniques learnt there might well be used against the people of Britain" (p.6).

"This Act (The Prevention of Terrorism Act—rushed through Parliament after the Birmingham bombings) could be used against every section of the Labour movement" (p.28).

¹ Northern Ireland: a Programme for Action by Irene Brennan, Communist Party, 25p.

Of particular theoretical and practical political value is the treatment of such vital questions as the correct strategy for securing the withdrawal of British troops, the importance of the struggle for democracy in the present Northern Ireland context and the problem of violence and counter-violence.

INTERVIEWS WITH CARRILLO

In a new book published in France Santiago Carrillo carries further his analysis of the problems that he dealt with in such a stimulating way in his *Problems of Socialism Today* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1970). In *Demain l'Espagne* (Seuil, Paris, 1974)—the title has the double meaning of "Spain Next" and "Spain Tomorrow"—the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain is interviewed by Régis Debray and the historian Max Gallo (following the technique used previously by Debray in his *Conversations with Allende*, N.L.B., 1971).

"I thought," says Carrillo in his introduction, "that a present-day Communist leader should not shy away from exposing himself to this kind of unrestricted questioning. Why always spread the image of the leader who knows everything, has an answer to everything, is invulnerable and sits in a kind of ivory tower far away from everything that could appear heretical?"

The result is an extremely frank discussion of the history, present policies and perspectives of the Spanish Communists, in which the often challenging questions of Debray and Gallo serve as a spur for Carrillo to amplify and deepen his analysis.

The book also provides a fascinating insight into Carrillo's own life from his days as General Secretary of the Socialist Youth of Spain in the thirties through his experiences as a functionary of the Young Communist International in Moscow and secretly in North Africa and fascist Portugal posing as a Uruguayan business-man, interviews with Stalin and Tito and his subsequent reactions to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. It is all told with modesty, humanity and touches of humour.

The personal narrative is intertwined with

accounts and assessments of the Spanish Popular Front and civil war, the underground struggle, the political debates that led to a reorientation of the Party after 1956 as well as those around its opposition to the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the subsequent "normalisation", and its relationship to the socialist countries. It is necessary to criticise some aspects of these countries, says Carrillo, but at the same time "no revolutionary party should break with a socialist country—and that goes for China, too."

COMMUNIST STRATEGY IN SPAIN

Dealing with his party's strategy, Carrillo acknowledges that under Franco the residues of feudalism had been liquidated in the "Prussian way". However, he insists, "the problem of freedoms is not necessarily or solely linked with the bourgeois character of a revolution." In Spain today "the problem of freedom for society is the first problem to solve. There is no contradiction between the fact that Spain is a capitalist country and that the problem of freedom stands right in the foreground." If, parallel with this, Spanish Communists posed the problem of socialism, they would be "closing the door both to socialism and to freedom". However, their strategy envisaged their going on to develop the struggle for socialism "because from the historical point of view, Spanish society is ripe for socialism".

Carrillo emphasises that in developed Western European countries "the forces of culture are even more important than the peasants". The former could not be offered the land but it was necessary to find the link between them and the working class. "This link is the freedom of culture . . . without it no alliance is possible."

In more than one part of the book Carrillo discusses the problems of the *political* system of socialism and his view that in abolishing class exploitation "the liberation of the whole of society and of man" has not yet been achieved. "When people say: Socialism *equals* bureaucracy, I recognise that it's true, in certain cases. . .", he tells his interviewers.

"In our countries, where the democratic traditions are real," says Carrillo, "I can very well envisage a socialist regime governed together and even alternatively by the Communists, the socialists and the Christians favourable to socialism". A Marxist vanguard party would still be needed alongside other

parties "which will bring their solutions to the problems on an equal footing with the Communist Party which will not have a monopoly of the leadership".

On the leftist groups, Carrillo says: "All the Communists of my generation were leftists." Thus he appreciates the sincerity of young leftists today "who easily lose their way and whom it is necessary to treat as future companions, because despite their attacks on us they are already enemies of fascism." By discussing patiently with them the Spanish Communists had been able to win over many sincere leftists and isolate the provocateurs. "Personally," he adds, "I sometimes consider the ultra-left criticisms as a positive element, when one knows how to make use of them."

Lawrence and Wishart plan to publish next Spring an English translation of this extremely interesting and valuable book.

JOURNEY INSIDE THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

A similar interview technique is used in another book also published by Seuil in France last year—*Voyage à l'Intérieur du Parti Communiste*. The French Communist Party agreed to let two TV journalists, André Harris and Alain de Sédouy, bring along their tape recorders and helped them to arrange interviews with whoever they wanted in the party. Those interviewed include such well-known Communists as Marchais, Duclos (before his recent death), Leroy, Fajon, Laurent and Elleinstein, as well as rank and file members of the Party. The book is of considerable political interest as well as being a vivid expression of the efforts of the French Communists in recent years to make their party much more open.

MARXIST THEORY OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

Readers will be interested to know that the long promised book by Lucien Sève on Marxist philosophy and psychology has now been published². It is a monograph which originally was a lecture given by Sève in 1968 while he was preparing his major work—*Théorie Marxiste de la Personnalité Humaine*—a book of 600 pages, which is to be published by Harvester Press at a later date. Sève's work contains many new ideas and the smaller work that we now have in English is a very use-

² *Marxism and the Theory of Human Personality*, Lawrence & Wishart, £1.50.

ful synopsis and introduction to the larger one.

Sève explains that all the different schools and approaches to psychology have failed to produce a convincing theory of the adult human personality. The reason, he says, is that the development of psychology has been obstructed by a logical obstacle—how can science provide for a concept of the individual as *such* when scientific concepts deal with the particular only insofar as it represents the general? Sève's work is a sustained attempt to prove that this problem can only be solved within the framework of a strict adherence to the concepts of dialectical and historical materialism.

The main thesis of Sève's work is that the solution to the problem is to be found in Marx's 6th Thesis on Feuerbach "The human essence . . . is the ensemble of social relations". Sève's point is that writers such as Adam Schaff, Garaudy and Althusser have misread this thesis by taking it to refer to the human *individual*. On the contrary, he says, Marx was saying that the human essence does not exist at the level of the individual but at the level of social relations. Given this, psychological theory must start out from a theory of the way in which specific social relations, and fundamentally productive relations, give a particular logic to the human essence. Thus against those who seek to model psychology on the natural sciences or on linguistics, Sève is saying that the best guide is Marxist economics when one has understood the way in which the latter implies a concept of the historical forms of individuality and the development of those forms.

The book concludes with a stimulating discussion of the psychological implications of the formulae "to each according to his work" and "to each according to his needs".

Everyone interested in the development of Marxism and in psychology should read Lucien Sève's work which we hope will open the widespread discussion in this country that it has already led to in many parts of the world.

A SOVIET VIEW OF ASIAN PROBLEMS

All interested in the political, economic and social problems of "Third World" countries, especially those in Asia, will find a recently published English translation of a book by two Soviet Orientalists³ well worth reading.

This scholarly work takes the form of a

critical though on the whole friendly, argument with Gunnar Myrdahl, the eminent Swedish economist, about the causes and ways out of backwardness and underdevelopment in India and other Asian countries as outlined in his books—*Asian Dilemma: an Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations* and *The Challenge of World Poverty: a World Anti-Poverty Programme in Outline*.

The argument centres around Myrdahl's concept of the primacy of political and social *institutions* in causing and perpetuating backwardness in these countries and the need therefore to aim at eliminating *these* rather than concentrating first of all on economic growth, as decisive for their advance.

In a wide ranging critique and rejection of these views, the authors outline their own view of a correct scientific methodology in the approach to the problem of backwardness in Third World countries, discuss the complex problems connected with its elimination, the implications of state regulation of the economy in socialist and developing countries and, finally, the "non-capitalist road". Although they agree that this involves many problems and demands different approaches in different countries, they argue that the existence of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries make it a viable and realisable perspective.

THE CHALLENGE OF MARXISM

Congratulations to the London School of Economics Branch of the Communist Party for the production of *The Challenge of Marxism: a Guide to Reading*⁴. It is essentially a short bibliography with introductory notes including sections on Introduction to Marxism; Marx and Engels; The Marxist Tradition; Books on Marx and Marxism; Revolutionary Movements; History, Sociology; International Relations; Economics; Philosophy; Soviet Studies; Imperialism; Fascism; Women; Liberation and Socialism; Art; Periodicals.

Every reader will, of course, have his or her own proposals for inclusion or omission, but such a work was urgently needed. Let us hope that it will be the forerunner of a larger critical bibliography in book form which could be brought up to date from time to time; and which should be accompanied by shorter lists like that of the LSE Branch.

What about it, Lawrence & Wishart?

³ *Asian Dilemma: A Soviet View and Myrdahl's Concept* by R. Ulyahovsky and P. Pavlov, Progress Publishers, Moscow, available from Central Books.

⁴ *The Challenge of Marxism: A Guide to Reading*, LSE Communist Party, 25p plus postage, available from Jackie Bridges (Students), 16 King Street, WC2E 8HY.

Women in Education and the Student Movement

Sue Slipman

(The author is the National Secretary of the National Union of Students)

Educational opportunity is one of the central demands of the Women's Movement, fought for by feminists and those committed to Women's Rights alike, as a pre-condition in making advances for women. It is, however, not the only condition necessary and taking this demand in isolation from the other demands put forward by the movement can make it a meaningless and abstract slogan. In fact, it is impossible to understand the nature of women's oppression without an analysis of the economic, political, social and ideological factors at work in our society which create the complex web of that oppression, and of which the lack of educational opportunity and the ideological role of education is a part.

To separate out the education system from its social function is a dangerous procedure. At the same time to analyse education as totally subservient to the social relations of production and the economic base of capitalism is equally dangerous. Despite the present economic crisis and the trend towards education (tailoring) to meet the needs of monopoly capitalism, possibilities exist for winning increased opportunities for women within an education system which can be transformed into a positive force for liberation. In order to appreciate the changes which are necessary we must examine the present opportunities for women in education; the role of education in perpetuating sexual oppression and

TABLE I

Men and women students in advanced and non-advanced FE courses¹

	Men	Women		Men	Women
ADVANCED COURSES			NON-ADVANCED COURSES		
Univ. 1st degrees:			ONC:		
Engineering/Tech.	916	4	Engineering/Tech.	25776	331
Science	2177	597	Science	6325	2940
CNAA 1st degrees:			Social/Admin./Business/ Commerce	13618	3940
Engineering/Tech.	8142	103			
Science	4007	756	CGLI:		
HND:			Engineering/Tech.	400493	4576
Engineering/Tech.	8728	56	Science	4191	2319
Science	2532	467	Social/Admin./Business	8488	6632
HNC:			Wholesale/Retail	3319	3221
Engineering/Tech.	23482	90			
Science	4737	1112	ALL ADVANCED COURSES		
NON-ADVANCED COURSES			Engineering	42028	154
OND:			Building	10398	63
Engineering/Tech.	5259	62	Metal Technology	1594	21
Science	725	328	Science	18375	3502
Business/Commerce	3726	4234	Social/Admin./Business	61342	9690
			Professional and Vocational	9863	3674

¹ Source: "Statistics of Education 1970" published in *The Education Training and Employment of Women and Girls*, ATTI, 1971.

the relation between these factors and the social role of women. In order to ensure that the necessary changes are fought for and won we must appreciate the development and the role of the Women's Liberation Movement and seek ways towards alliance with this progressive force, particularly within the mass movements which are increasingly taking up women's demands.

The Present Situation

The present situation of women in the education system is far from satisfactory; table one gives an indication of the overall position.

At major educational establishments in 1972 there were 1,017,434 men compared with 736,507 women. However, even these figures are deceptive as the majority of women on advanced courses are completing studies which confirm their social role. For example, in OND Business Studies it is normally the case that women are expected to qualify in Shorthand Typing.²

Opportunities outside full-time education are even more bleak. In the age group between 15 and 21 who obtained day release from their employers in 1972 there were 472,755 men compared with 92,162 women. Indeed, the industry with the highest number of women employees has the lowest figure for day-release opportunities (out of 182,757 women employees, 3,387 or 1.9 per cent obtain day release). In the same year school-leavers obtaining apprenticeships show a similar discrimination against women with 38 per cent of boy school-leavers and 7 per cent of girl school-leavers. It is also necessary to add that over 50 per cent of the girls on apprenticeships were training to be hairdressers. Perhaps the most interesting figures are those for students at evening institutes, which give the lie to the constantly reiterated statement that women are simply not interested in education. Here 526,054 men participate, compared with 1,064,002 women. Unfortunately, no further breakdown of figures into subject areas taken is available.³

What is indicated by all the figures is the severe limitation on educational opportunities for women and more importantly that, where women do have some representation in higher and further education, they are taking courses which confirm their current social role rather than challenge it. This is still as true within the figures for university graduates as it is within technical and business education. The figures issued by the University Grants Commission on graduate numbers for 1972 indicate that women make up under

a quarter of graduates in medicine, dentistry and science and a much smaller proportion in engineering and technical subjects.⁴

These figures do not merely represent a lack of planning by the Department of Education and Science to provide facilities for women; they are a product of the social role that women serve as child minders and cheap labour; in fact, they are a product of women's relations to the mode of production and the mode of reproduction. Indeed, all the factors endemic to women's "oppression" are present within the education service. The provision of nursery places in colleges to allow women, who still have the main responsibility for children, to take advantage of the meagre chances offered them is abysmal. Out of some 750 colleges in this country approximately 25 have types of nursery provision which range tremendously both in quality of care for children and the number of places they offer.

The two things they all share, however, is that they are underfinanced and have long waiting lists for children unable to use local authority provision. No priority is given to student mothers in most catchment areas, and children are either left with friends or untrained child minders. Thus, for women with children the picture is particularly bleak: at their entrance interviews they are likely to be asked whether or not they can make provision for their children. If they cannot, they are unlikely to be accepted for the course. This is the way in which college authorities under government policies are forced to deal with the problem. It is a very neat solution; refuse admittance and the problem of having to provide nursery facilities no longer exists. Despite this policy there is a real and immediate need for such facilities, but it is perhaps the long-term need which underlines the proposition that change cannot take place until the material resources are made available, positively to encourage women to take up educational opportunities.

At present the limitation on opportunities works through several different strands; there are few opportunities for women to enter courses in which they are unqualified, as bridging courses are not provided and women are still being channelled into "feminine" areas of study at school; the same is true with retraining schemes for working women. Discrimination is faced by women in selection procedures, either through quota provisions or, more likely, unofficial selection procedures. Whilst anti-discrimination legislation is supposed to abolish quota systems which

² "Paper 45", Schools Council Working Party.

³ Statistics of Education, 1972, Volume 3, *Further Education*, HMSO, 1974, p. 4.

⁴ University Grants Commission, "First Employment of University Graduates", 1971-2, HMSO, 1974.

operate against women, it will not abolish the attitudes and prejudices that set them up in the first place and does nothing to discriminate positively in favour of women.

"Main Social Function"!

Indeed, all the issues which affect women in higher and further education cannot be separated out from all the factors creating women's oppression. The demands for nursery facilities, equal pay and job opportunities and for free contraception and abortion on demand are equally relevant if advances for women in education are to be made. The last of these demands which specifies that women have the right to control their own biological production is a central one in the attempt of women to redefine their social role, for it is the relation of women to the mode of reproduction, i.e. the family, which re-enforces the social and ideological subjection. This factor has been recognised by endless government reports which have planned and structured education for women and which demonstrate that state planning rests upon these relations. A good example is the Newsom Report, "Half our Future", produced in 1964 and offering conclusions on the educational needs of the so-called "less able". Writing in the *Observer* on the publication of the report, Sir John Newsom had this to say:

"We try to educate girls into becoming imitation men and as a result we are wasting and frustrating their qualities of womanhood at great expense to the community. I believe that in addition to their needs as individuals, our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function—which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home and to be mothers."⁵

On this basis the only educational requirements women need are those enabling them to look after children, to be homemakers and to take low-paid, unskilled jobs as time-fillers in between. If it is accepted that this is the major role of women, then it follows that there is no need to provide nursery facilities, education, equal pay, and so on, and this expression is an integral part of the ideological function of education which teaches women to see themselves and men to see them as socially inferior. Thus, educational planning, resources and ideological content are based upon

the dominant relations of production and reproduction and present a complex framework through which women learn to accommodate their social role and through which they interpret the world. In other words, being produces consciousness and not the other way round.

Exploitation and Ideological Oppression

However, it is because education is a social product that it cannot remain outside changes taking place within society as a whole. The contradiction between women who are developing their awareness of their double oppression and an education system designed to perpetuate that oppression is becoming increasingly obvious. For women at the point of production, within the workforce, the contradiction contained within their exploitation as workers and their traditional consciousness is highlighted over the question of pay and conditions of work. This can, and has, led to raising questions about the nature of state provision for child care, work within the home, and so on. For women at the point of ideological production and reproduction, within the education system, the contradiction between their aspirations and real expectations in terms of career prospects, social roles, involvement as students within their unions and the way in which their abilities as intelligent human beings are constantly undermined by the attitudes of lecturers and fellow students, leads to a similar questioning.

It is perhaps not surprising that the initiators of women's liberation groups within this country were ex-students coming into contact with the real conditions facing women as workers and with children, because for these women both aspects of the contradiction existed—the material and the ideological—in a particularly sharp way. It was these women who began to re-examine the question of women's oppression in a way which established a context for the grievances they felt and the contradictions within which they were trapped.

Whilst it was the struggles of working class women which gave impetus to the movement (over material questions), it was women who had predominantly been involved in ideological production who first voiced the need for women to change their material conditions and the consciousness of themselves produced by these conditions. This they did by talking and organising together in a movement which could express their aspirations and allow for the political action necessary for such changes. It was the stress on ideological conditioning and consciousness which began to tie the desperate demands of women which had been on the agendas of trade unions and progressive political parties for years into a

⁵ Sir John Newsom, *The Observer*, 6.9.64, quoted in *Part 6—Time Women*, Judith Walker, published by National Union of Students, 1972.

coherent whole through an examination and an understanding of women's oppression. An examination which since Engels had been almost ignored by Marxists.

In other words, women's consciousness of themselves and their social relations are not merely an ideological condition; it is an ideological condition developed through the material conditions within which they live. These conditions are their super-exploitation as workers and the oppression of their role within the home, in domestic labour. It is upon this exploitation that ideological oppression is based:

"Men (*sic*) make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under conditions directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."⁶

Demands of Students and Workers

Many of the demands of women in the present generation of students are the same as the demands of working women, particularly where demands have a long-term perspective and will benefit women workers (for nurseries, bridging and retraining courses etc.), which are aimed at opening up educational opportunities for those women at present excluded and make it possible for women students and women workers to organise together. But it would be a mistake to assume that all issues are identical. One trend of feminism within the National Union of Students makes this mistake and puts forward the Working Women's Charter as a basis for both working and student women without taking into account the specific conditions relating to each sector. For example, the issue of the Married Women's Grant⁷ has an ideological relation to the lack of equal pay for women workers, but it is totally different from the equal pay demand in the form of payment, how it is measured, the bodies which make the payment and therefore in the way in which it was possible to organise around the demand

⁶ K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Progress Publishers, 1972, p. 10.

⁷ In the Grants Review of 1975 the Married Women's Grant element was abolished. Previously whilst a married man could claim £605 a married woman was only entitled to £490, simply because she was married. The basis for this was that she received the "living at home" element received by students living in their parent's home, whereas the man was naturally seen as the breadwinner and the "head" of the household. Whilst the crudest form of discrimination has thus been abolished through the NUS Campaign, other forms still exist.

for its abolition. No matter how such economist strands try to twist the arguments, students are not workers involved in production. They share with workers' oppression as women, but their specific conditions as students are different.

In the past it has also been argued strongly that the issues affecting women students are mainly ideological and that the major struggle of women in the student movement must be to challenge sexist ideology within the content and form of their courses and the structure and organisation of their student union. Whilst it is true that certain aspects of oppression faced by women students are more overtly ideological than those faced by working women because this is the process in which they are involved, it would be totally mistaken to concentrate on ideological aspects of oppression to the exclusion of the material conditions which give rise to them. In fact, to do so amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, rather than to change the basis of that reality, or, as Marx stated of the Young Hegelians:

"Since the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute independent existence, as the real chains of men (just as the Old Hegelians declared the true bonds of human society) it is evident that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against the illusion of consciousness. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to recognise it by means of another interpretation."⁸

These two strands of economism and idealism both have to be combated, but they can only be successfully defeated in a framework in which both the specific material conditions affecting women as students and their ideological manifestations are recognised. It is only through the fusion of these two elements that a broad-based campaign, both strong enough to win the demands put forward and conscious enough to challenge the ideology of sexism, both within the educational institutions and the students' union, can be built.

Campaigns and Consciousness

It is perhaps the central problem for political activists and the Communist Party which is particularly highlighted by campaigns around the demands of women; the problem is to campaign

⁸ K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1968, p. 360.

on concrete issues which can involve the majority of people in whose interest the campaign is waged in such a way that the consciousness of those people can be developed. As Lenin states:

"If the world is eternally moving (as Marxists think), reflected by the developing human consciousness, where is the 'static' here? The point at issue is not the immutable essence of things, or an immutable consciousness, but the correspondence between consciousness which reflects nature and the nature which is reflected by consciousness."⁹

An effective campaign contains within it many different levels of consciousness which can be united around a single issue, but involvement in that campaign does not mechanistically of its own accord change the consciousness of the people involved. For example, it is totally correct that campaigns within the student movement (and elsewhere) be broad enough to include all those who can be united around the issues involved, in this case from committed feminists to those women and men who are concerned about the issues involved or feel them to be in their interest. It would be totally incorrect to do as certain sections of feminists wish and to have a "feminist" campaign, for it would restrict involvement to those who already have a feminist consciousness, for there can be nothing else that makes disparate campaigning issues essentially feminist. This is sectarianism in its real sense of contempt for the masses; it is also anti-Marxist, suggesting that consciousness cannot be changed by involvement in changing material conditions and that to be a feminist is some god-given flash of inspirational light. In the last analysis it is also anti-feminist; if feminists have at heart the interests of all women it is a total contradiction to exclude those women who have not yet developed their consciousness of their real conditions.

It is also necessary to recognise that in many situations it will be involvement of already committed feminists who will raise the question of interest to women, although this is not always the case, and that without the involvement of feminists it is extremely difficult to change the consciousness of the people involved. In other words, without the involvement of those people who are developing a perspective and analysis of their own oppression a campaign can become issue orientated and have no internal cohesion. Within the Women's Campaign in the mass movements it is not only feminists who have this

perspective to give to objectives, for many of them as yet lack the class analysis on which to found their feminism; thus it is also Communists and socialists acting in unity with other forces and engaged in combating idealism and economism which can create the dynamism necessary to advance both material and ideological conditions for women.

Autonomous Women's Movement

A major point of contention in the past has been over the question of whether or not it is correct for Communists to support an autonomous women's movement. It can be readily agreed that the major contradiction under capitalism is between labour and capital. It is, however, essential to recognise that within this major contradiction others exist. For women there is a further contradiction to that of their role in social production, as workers; this is their role within social reproduction in the home and with children. To analyse women's oppression only at the point of production, i.e. within the major contradiction under capitalism, can explain one factor of that oppression as workers; it does not, however, help us to explain their oppression as women. It is essential to state that this is the condition that all women share, whatever their class position. It is also the condition, necessary for the maintenance of capitalism, which can lead women of different class positions into alliance with the working class. This alliance is not by any means an automatic one, but it can be achieved. Thus the objective conditions exist for a movement uniting the interests of women as a group. I believe that only through existence of such a movement can the framework be created through which women can recognise and pinpoint their own oppression within the major contradiction between labour and capital under capitalist social formations and thus lead to that necessary alliance which is a precondition for socialist revolution:

"The emancipation of women is not an act of charity, the result of a humanitarian or compassionate attitude. The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the revolution, the guarantee of its continuity and the pre-conditions for its victory."¹⁰

It is only an autonomous feminist movement which can unite the seemingly disparate issues affecting women in their ideological implications as it forcefully challenges the material conditions

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Peking, 1972, p. 154.

¹⁰ Samora Machel, "Women's Liberation is Essential for the Revolution", *The African Communist*, No. 61, 1975, p. 37.

on which these are based. Without such a movement the overall struggle of labour against capital would be greatly weakened.

A major problem for Communists is helping to develop a relationship between the women's movement and the working class in which the demands and interests of women are not subjugated through economism within the working class and in which that alliance is not split by separatist tendencies within the women's movement. The relationship which must be developed has to ensure that each element within the alliance enriches the other. However, the problem is not just to encourage an alliance between the organisational expressions of the working class and feminist movement, it is also related to inter-organisational work, i.e. how women who identify with the women's liberation movement should work in and through their unions and how the unions can help them to do this.

Unity and Autonomy

It is the overwhelming task of progressives within the mass movement to create unity around demands and to carry the mass movement as a whole forward. Thus within the trades and student unions the task is to represent the interests of women workers/students as both workers/students and as women given the specific dual oppression of women. If the organisations are to accomplish successfully this task it requires changes within the nature of the organisations themselves to allow women to be represented through them and greater increase of the numbers of women involved at all levels. The way in which conditions are created to allow women to organise within the framework of the student/trade union is a very delicate problem. The solution to it must avoid the danger of fragmenting the *raison d'être* of the organisation on the lines of sex, i.e. unity, at the same time as it positively discriminates in favour of women. Within the National Union of Students there is a tendency which wishes to see the principle of the self-organisation of women carried into the structures of the union itself.

At present NUS is a federal organisation; its policy-making powers are vested in its National Sovereign Conferences (biannual) attended by the majority of the 750 local students' unions in membership and policy-making conferences of the various sectors in education. Its *raison d'être* is that it represents the interests of all students through its policy formation, translating this into active campaigning work which seeks to involve the vast majority of students. Clearly the problems of women cut across all sectors of the education world; at the same time there are issues

which may affect one sector, more than others, e.g. the right for women to wear trousers in colleges of education. Certain political tendencies have fought in the past, and continue to do so, for a special conference of women students able to make policy on all issues affecting women, which should be closed to men. This tendency suffers from a confusion of the levels at which they are working and seek to conflate the particular feminist movement into the level of the mass organisation.

Levels of Organisation

As a tendency it is closely aligned to the "feminist campaign" one; both are essentially anti-democratic because they seek to impose a definition on to the mass movement which conflicts with the objectives of that organisational form and which would exclude sections who have the right to participate at all levels within that particular organisation.

In previous articles in *Marxism Today*, levels of organisation have been defined within the student movement at the level of the student community, the student organisation, the political party, i.e. the Communist Party and others, the level of the broad unity—i.e. broad left through which progressive forces work together, and the level of the mass organisation itself—the NUS. Dave Cook argued that to conflate these levels is to blur the distinction between the mass movement and the left:

"The Communist Party recognises both the *separateness* of these differing levels of struggle and their *interconnection*. Therefore the policy for which the party campaigns in the student movement aims at the mobilisation, not just of committed socialists, but of the widest possible number of students."¹¹

The problem which arises with a feminist movement is that it is not a Marxist-Leninist party—it is not, in fact, a party at all, and whilst the women within it share certain aspects of ideological understanding, there is no defined ideological unity and many perspectives are contained within it as definitions of feminism. Thus, to look for an overall approach to work within the mass movement is to place a definition on the women's movement alien to its nature. Conversely the placing by certain feminist tendencies of a definition on to the unitary mass movement,

¹¹ D. Cook, "The Student Movement, Left Unity and the Communist Party", *Marxism Today*, October, 1974, p. 301.

i.e. NUS, which it cannot support and which is alien to its nature, has to be fought.

A further problem arises because it has been fought in the past on anti-feminist grounds. Crude Marxists and confused chauvinists have argued on the existence of a separatist tendency within the Women's Liberation Movement and that any separate organisation of women is incorrect. This is both short-sighted and conveniently allows men to both condemn the women's movement and to trivialise the issues facing women in a way which condones and strengthens their own hegemony. Lenin's remarks on libertarianism and ultra-leftism as a product of the economist sins of the working class could well be cited as condemnation of such attitudes. The self-organisation of women is perhaps the best corrective to such attitudes.

Fundamentally there are no complete answers to the problem other than a recognition of its nature and the attempt to structure a campaign which can combine these disparate forces, in which the left and the party have to combat adventurism politically, whilst being committed to the campaigns and the ideological issues they raise.

Part of creating the conditions in the mass movement organisations which can encourage the participation of women is the creation of forums in which the issues affecting women within that organisation can be discussed and raised and which might not be raised elsewhere. If these forums are not to remain mere talk shops it is equally necessary that the debates and mobilisations are fed into the mass organisation through its policy-making channels. Only if this is done can the awareness and commitment of the mass movement as a whole to fight on these issues be achieved. Without this injection into the mass movement any such forums will remain only a token sop to the demands of women within them. It is here that an essential task for Communists and their allies within the broad left exists, for these forces can provide the necessary bridge helping women to raise the issues discussed within their forums within the policy-making conferences themselves.

Within the National Union of Students this exists at present in the women's conferences which take place fairly regularly. An activist network is at present being created which will meet regularly and act as the link between the conferences and the local and area organisation of the NUS.

Education and the Present Crisis

In the present economic crisis putting forward demands for increased educational expenditure to

create the material conditions allowing women to claim their right to an education which serves their interests is directly counter to the right wing leadership of the Labour Government and their strategy of cutting the education service to fit the needs of monopoly capitalism. Indeed, the education cuts being implemented by the Government at the present time hit the areas of education at the discretion of the local education authorities hardest. These areas are those of part-time, day release, adult education and evening study. There has also been a substantial cut-back in the number of places for teacher training courses, where women predominate. Lord Crowther Hunt's statements on the need for "manpower planning" within the education service is indicative of the rationalisation of education to create as cheaply as possible the skilled and middle-grade technicians for industry and commerce. Thus it is unlikely that demands for resources for women in the education service will be easily granted; they cannot even be fought for without challenging the reactionary policies being implemented. Without the fight for adequate resources, however, little can be done to advance the ability of women to benefit.

A major problem raised by the fight for the material conditions of advancement is the question of whether or not quota systems which operate in favour of women are correct demands, both within the mass organisations and within the subject departments. One aspect of the problem raised by quota systems is that they can be a mechanical solution to a long-term political, economic and social problem and can obscure the deeper problems. For example, even where colleges have guaranteed a place to every woman who applies for science and engineering courses with minimal qualifications, the number of women has been minimal because of the sexual selection of subjects at school age and the sort of careers guidance girls are given and which they accept from social and ideological pressures. Within a perspective of tackling all these areas the concept of quota systems may be useful as a deliberate means of ensuring greater opportunity for women and encouraging them to take qualifying courses by guaranteeing them a place if they do. This, however, in a context of cutting back on educational resources as a whole, must not become an excuse for shifting limited resources to women and must be part of a demand for increased educational opportunity for all people. Such demands must also be set in the context of the demands of working women, for there is little point in qualifying on a training course for a particular form of work if no job opportunities exist within the field for women, or if because

employers can get away with not giving women equal pay they encourage the training of women enabling the Government to use the retraining of women as a rationalisation of education cut-backs.

Ideological Questions

So far we have examined the material conditions which exist and those which will be necessary for advance. Education, however, has another major social function:

"The ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental subjection are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations grasped as ideas."¹²

Taken out of context this general proposition can be interpreted as a conspiracy on the part of the ruling class for ideological control (social); however, Marx makes it quite clear that this is not his analysis:

"The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can be made only in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity."¹³

In other words, there is a clear concept of human agency in the development of consciousness through life activity, i.e. production and reproduction. Thus the role played by education cannot be equated with mere behaviouristic reductionism which confuses instruction with education, or with simple reflex action which reduces the theory of the human mind into mere mechanistic interaction with material conditions. Much of the work of child psychologists is helpful in looking at the development of consciousness and the role of language development within the formation of concepts, ideological frameworks and perception which allows for intervention in life activity. Luria and Yudovich demonstrate

from their work with mentally-retarded twins with specific speech deformations that the low-level development of their speech which inhibits social communication has a relationship to their inability to plan their actions. After the experimental period, in which the twins are separated and forced to develop speech ability, they were:

"in a position to *detach themselves from the immediate situation, to subordinate their activity to verbally formulated projects and so to stand in a new relation to this situation.*"¹⁴

Language and Consciousness

The importance of the work of Luria and Yudovich is that it indicates the role of language formation in building, not only mental abilities, but also consciousness of the world. They suggest that through language formation, bound up with material activity and operation, human beings participate in defining the limits of their view of themselves in relation to the world. Furthermore, they state that this process operates within the framework set by the material conditions of individuals—their class position and relations and their individual circumstances. In other words, language is a medium through which people define their relationship to the world and to each other; and through which they actively form their own thought processes and identity in given material conditions.

By extension it is easy to appreciate that within a society where a major division of labour is further complicated by a sexual division of labour, the material and ideological conditions within which young boys and girls develop are different. I would suggest that the sexual division of labour is therefore not simply an external condition imposed by the major division of labour, but that it is also internalised within the consciousness of men and women and the way they see themselves and each other and their relationship to the material world.

This has major implications for all realms of activity in which men's dominant position necessarily commits women to a subservient one. This is true not only within the productive sphere but also within the superstructural forms; culture, ideology and education among them.

Thus the language and its meanings which children learn become an integral part of structuring their consciousness and their interpretation of the world. Earlier in quoting from the Chairman of the Newsom Committee I gave an indica-

¹² K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 61.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴ A. R. Luria and F. La. Yudovich, *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child*, Penguin, 1971, p. 87.

tion of the ideological basis upon which the education of girls has been structured and the content of their education which corresponds to the material relations it expresses. Thus young girls actively, through their own intervention in the world, learn to be passive; they actively learn to internalise the contradictions within their mode of existence. Such a mode of existence, however, is not based upon some universal concept of the nature of woman:

The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.

NB: The distinction between subjectivism (scepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute within the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry, the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.¹⁵

Thus, it is totally undialectical to accept a definition of womanhood as absolute which is a product of material, social and ideological conditions which are themselves in motion. In accepting this proposition it becomes easier to recognise that as women organise together to change their material conditions, the way in which they see themselves and the way in which they are seen undergoes a process of redefinition; this time, however, from a conscious position which allows them to stand in a new relation to their material conditions.

Content of Education

At present the ideological content of education is still based upon traditional concepts of the social role and abilities of women. It has remained largely static and is thus out of step with the process of change in the dominant social relations affecting women and the heightened consciousness to which this is leading. Such static concepts within the form and content of education are now more overtly recognisable as a repressive force than at any time in the past. We need to examine ways in which education can become an ideological force aiding women's liberation.

One of the problems of Engels' analysis in the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* is stated in the preface to the first edition:

"According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the

final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter, and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species."¹⁶

Thus whilst there are two points of analysis, the point of production and the point of reproduction, an understanding of the dominant social relations of production necessitates an enquiry into the relationship between the point of production and the point of reproduction. Marxists since Engels have tended to take a dualistic rather than a dialectical approach to the problems; as a result any analysis of the situation of women, dependent as it has been on the point of reproduction for its starting point, has tended to be ignored, and along with it the development of consciousness through the superstructural forms. We have, for instance, tended to ignore the role of language in the development of consciousness and the very difficult process of taking place in the women's movement at the present of seeking definitions for a new consciousness corresponding to new meanings within language and even seeking a new form of language, through which to make such definitions.

In looking at the educational requirements of the development of women's consciousness as socially active being challenging the dominant social relations of production, one thing is clear --we do not want more of the same. We do not simply demand the chance for women in education to learn more fully their oppression; no more than we would demand increased opportunities for black children and youths to learn that Africans are happy piccaninnies cheerfully slaving for the white man, or for any children to learn what a wonderful help imperialist plunder was to the people of Vietnam. Thus it is important to support the demand for women's study courses whilst accepting that it is extremely difficult to define what we want from them in a situation where no absolute definitions exist. One definition offered by Sue Beardon in a paper written for the National Union of Students accepts the following guidelines:

1. To provide alternative ways of looking at women and the assumptions of our culture, including the sciences.

¹⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 38, Moscow, 1961, p. 360.

¹⁶ F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Preface to the first edition, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972, pp. 71-72.

2. Providing new information about women, their history and their accomplishments.
3. Being the academic arm of women's liberation, which seeks to challenge prime assumptions basic to the political and social life of Western civilisation. A political and academic endeavour which seeks to awaken women to the reality of society, as well as to understand their reasons for their secondary status. To rewrite the books which exclude women or put over the understanding of women in terms of Freud and others.¹⁷

This introduces a far more group research-orientated course than the traditional taught course and has at its heart the concept of a democratic education system in the interests of and involving the people it is meant to serve.

At the present juncture it is possible to raise and win the demand for women's studies as an integral part of challenging education cut-backs and the rationalisation of the education system towards narrowly vocational education. The possibilities exist because, within the mass movement, there is a development of consciousness of the need to democratise education, both in terms of formal structures and ideological content, and women's studies courses challenge both these aspects.

Thus the two aspects of educational reform; the material and the ideological must be undertaken together so that women can both train within restricted areas and can also use education as a force within their liberation. Two focal points of the women's movement which both make it a potential ally of the working class and indicate the need for a women's movement as a prerequisite for challenging the dominant relations of production are the need to change the material conditions confronting women and a fundamental challenge to bourgeois ideology within which the oppression of women plays an integral part. To fulfil the potential for alliance between class and feminist forces, however, necessitates challenging the inroads of bourgeois ideology into the labour and student movements and making the demands and interests of women integral to those movements and ensuring their representation at all levels of the organisations.

The Role of the Communist Party

Communists work in a number of spheres in which the objectives of the Women's Liberation Movement need to be related to the fight for socialism. Communist Party students can help

raise and initiate discussion within their students' union on the demands of women, gaining the commitment of the mass movement as a whole in fighting for those demands on the widest possible basis for unity.

It is, however, also the duty of Communists to recognise the integral role of women's liberation groups at local and national level, operating both autonomously in their own right, through union, clubs and societies, and through the campaign groups within the students' unions, to reach the mass of students. However, the nature of the women's movement is not homogeneous and, depending on local conditions, it may not be possible to work with a group which has dominant separatist tendencies or which does not see the need for mass action around the demands it raises. Some groups do not recognise the need for changes in material conditions and concentrate on raising ideological issues; others may have sectarian attitudes to the mass movements. These problems are to be expected, as is the problem of widely differing levels of consciousness within the students' union as a whole. Thus, of importance is the paramount role which the Communist Party students with allies in the broad left can play, of creating the conditions for campaigning activity which can involve both committed feminists and socialists within a much wider political spectrum which can strengthen both the women's group itself and the progressive forces within the student movement.

No area within society is free from bourgeois ideology, including mass, democratic organisations. The Women's Liberation Movement has played an important role in raising ideological questions. Communists must make the connections between the material and ideological forces, allowing feminists to come to the conclusion of the need for socialism, and the mass movement to appreciate the role of the women's movement and to understand and act on the ideological questions it raises. In creating this alliance Communists have an important role to play in our overall perspective of uniting anti-capitalist forces as a precondition of advance towards socialism.

Equally important as translating into action the aspirations of women is our role as Marxists in developing our analysis of women's oppression as integral to the maintenance of capitalist society and our recognition of women's liberation as integral to the development of a socialist society. As revolutionaries, part of our task is to help the mass movement to break through the barriers of bourgeois ideology in the recognition that only through building socialism can their aspirations be achieved.

In the student movement Communists have a

¹⁷ Sue Beardon, "Women's Studies", *Conference Discussion Papers*, March, 1974, NUS, p. 10.

good record in defending the interests of students and fighting for educational opportunity; we must, however, through our independent work as Communists, fulfil our role in the democratisation of the education system to meet the needs of

the people it can potentially serve. Thus we must also challenge the sexist ideology within the content of education at the same time as we fight on material questions; fighting for women's studies courses is a part of this perspective.

Thoughts on Leisure and Sport

Terry Bushell

Part 1—Leisure

(We publish here the first of two articles on leisure and sport by Terry Bushell, Morning Star sports correspondent, qualified Football Association coach and author of a Communist Party pamphlet—Leisure and Recreation in Britain Today.)

Work and leisure used to be inseparable. Tied together by ritual and the seasonal cycle, they formed a bundle which was the people's culture. Philosophers from Rousseau to Marx have indicated the benefits of that union and the consequences of the separation.

In these two articles I want to look at some aspects of leisure little gone into by Marxists in spite of the obvious and important fact that at work nothing is ours; our leisure, and what we do with it, is all we have got that we can call our own. If I have appeared to say things dogmatically, it is only because it is boring to keep saying "maybe", "I think" and "I believe". The whole subject is very much open to debate and questions.

Also, if I have over-stated my case in showing what a good time the peasants and artisans had before the Industrial Revolution, this is a natural reaction to the prevailing lie that we have more leisure than they. Of course, they were subject to numerous incapacitating and fatal illnesses and diseases which we, with our medicines and knowledge, are never bothered with or quickly shake off; of course, they had to sustain a parasitic class which regarded and treated them as inferior beings; of course, agricultural work with primitive tools was at times a murderous, back-breaking occupation. But these well-documented aspects of rural life are not my concern here. My concern is with their leisure, which I maintain they had more of than is generally realised.

Mediaeval Leisure

The popular playgrounds were places of everyday life—the market place, the roads and streets, the open fields, the churchyard. You would not

recognise them as places of recreation. Travelling in a modern foreign country you form impressions of local customs from the buildings and appliances designed specifically for recreation—you see the playing fields with the pitches marked out for the various sports; you see the stadia, television sets, cinemas and theatres, the amusement arcades, the leisure and sports centres. Looking into the past, you have to go back to the ancient Greeks, with their amphitheatres, and the Romans, with their stadia, to find anything comparable; between then and now there is nothing.

An unfortunate side-effect of this is that as the participants neither wrote down the rules of their games nor set down their experiences and feelings on paper, all that we know of rural recreations we get from scribes who never mention the subject except to attack it. Preachers did not like people revelling in churchyards or on Sundays, for example, and lords wanted men to practise archery rather than play football.

Accepting that leisure was not so sharply defined as now, how much time free of work did people have? Walter of Henley, writing in the Middle Ages, suggested that the working year amounted to only 44 weeks; and when you add Sundays and the numerous other occasions for taking time off, you arrive at an estimation of almost a third of the year being leisure.

Walter of Henley is one of the few to actually impart information about working people's leisure, rather than merely fulminate against it. More typical is this account of the survivors of the Black Death of 1348: "... mouldering in ease, they dissolutely abandoned themselves to the sins of gluttony, with feasts and taverns and delight in delicate viands; and again to games of

hazard and to unbridled lechery. . . .” Priests who, after proclaiming that the pestilence was God’s wrath and that the people deserved it, had fled to the comparative safety of an abbey, returned to note that the crime rate had soared and that sensual pleasure definitely rated higher than quiet contentment.

The clerics, while condemning the permissive society, failed to note the reason for it, which was that people were scared and fed up. Outbreaks of plague fell with depressing regularity after that first catastrophe . . . 1361, 1368, 1371, 1375 . . . it must have been like living with the Bomb except that every few years it exploded. At all times, churchmen had a lot to say for themselves. Religion, of course, used to be a vital part of people’s lives, influencing all they did, and the close relationship between the agricultural cycle and the liturgical year, with its feasts, blessings and processions, shows how tightly ritual tied together work and leisure. Festivals occurred at the slack periods of the agrarian year. The annual parish feast—the wake—could drag on for weeks. The leaders of the Peasants’ Revolt were able to organise the Corpus Christi Day march on London so quickly by making it a familiar Corpus Christi procession. The members of each craft “gild” marched behind their “gild” banner, as they did on ordinary Corpus Christi processions.

Wakes

The wake was one of the most important holidays, a major recreational event. Wakes were most often celebrated around the time of the anniversary of the parish church’s dedication, commonly starting on the Sunday after the feast day of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, though there were a lot of exceptions to this rule, for a wake could not be held in the middle of winter. Some of the activities, apart from just general *bonhomie* and good eating and drinking, might be the familiar sports such as boxing, wrestling and cudgelling, as well as donkey racing, wheelbarrow racing (while blindfolded), a women’s smock race, contests in eating hot hasty-pudding, grinning through a horse-collar (the funniest won), chasing a greased pig, running in sacks, and sometimes bull-baiting or cock-fighting. Usually there were stalls with gingerbread, nuts and fruit. Friends and relations would come from other parishes.

Wakes, like rebellions, never happened in the winter. Nothing ever happened in the winter. The long winter evenings were a drag. With only feeble illumination and nothing to read, listen to or look at, diversion was provided by tavern talk and games, professional entertainers and sex. One

of the causes of India’s current population problem is boredom in the evenings. As a poet said in the sixteenth century: “Though love and all his pleasures are but toys, they shorten tedious nights.” Board games were the other major diversion, though the most popular game, and the oldest, was dice, in its simplest form; simply throwing the dice and betting on the result of the throw.

Strolling minstrels frequented taverns and were at any festivity or celebration. The clerics had them graded, some minstrels being respectable, most being damnable. In reality, it was impossible to make such distinctions, for the artistes arranged their material to suit their audience. In any case, the recital of long, heroic epics became tedious.

Everyone was glad when the versatile performers turned to the lighter side of their art, to songs (even if a little coarse), to juggling and tumbling, to dancing on ropes, on swords, or upside-down (which, if the entertainer was female, was more than a little coarse). By the end of the Middle Ages, the recitation of long romances was a thing of the past. Those who appreciated such stuff could now read at least some of it in print, Caxton printing the first book in English in 1475, or they could see the stories enacted in the emergent theatre.

Industrial Revolution

In the seventeenth century began the long dawn chorus of economists and moralists heralding the approach of the Industrial Revolution—the working classes had to be made to work. Accordingly, popular recreation was attacked as ferociously as it had been during the time of the plague epidemics. Recreation was one of the many social and moral issues to be revalued during a period of acute cultural upheaval; a time when the diatribes of moralists dominated public debate, when discussion of sports entered the realm of politics, when leisure was regarded as an impediment to steady and productive labour; in short, puritanism spread like the plague.

The puritans saturated people’s minds with the idea that time is money. For this idea to spread, it was necessary that time could be measured as precisely as money; and for almost a century after 1680 English clockmakers were the best in the world. Their excellent products quickly covered Britain—and our clockwork culture began. Church and public clocks had been erected in the cities and big market towns from the fourteenth century onwards, and most parishes had church clocks by the end of the sixteenth, but they were not accurate, and the sundial remained in use (partly to set the clocks) counting

"only the hours that are serene", up to the last century; by when, as soon as people could afford it, they bought a timepiece.

The first generation of factory workers had to be taught the importance of time; the second generation fought for some time to call their own; the third generation struck for the right to work overtime at increased rates of pay. The terms of the bosses had been accepted, and the battles were fought within them. Time, like everything else now, to everyone was money.

Effect of the Enclosures

The early industrialists imposed a rigorous discipline upon their intractable employees in a number of ways—by the division of labour; the supervision of labour; fines for lateness and absenteeism; bells and clocks; money incentives; preachings and schoolings; the suppression of fairs and sports, and a campaign against holidays and wakes.

Above all, low wages. Most scribes had a double standard by which, whereas bosses were open to rational persuasion, their employees would only work when forced to by hunger. It is true in all places where there is no industrialisation, that people with a choice always opt for more leisure rather than more money; and this led the likes of the reverend Joseph Townsend to write such things as "the poor know little of the motives which stimulate the higher ranks to action—pride, honour and ambition. In general it is only hunger which can spur and goad them on to labour." Bishop Berkeley called it "temporary servitude".

The puritan attack, though ultimately victorious, had its setbacks. Although most of the saints' days fostered by Catholicism were abandoned after the Reformation, many customs went from strength to strength. Traditional recreations in the eighteenth century were thriving, deeply rooted and widely practised, some wakes and fairs actually being enlarged both in vigour and extent. The enclosure acts were the decisive weapons, the enclosed fields being the people's playgrounds.

The enclosure movement began in the twelfth century, proceeded quickly in the sixteenth and the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and was complete by the 1890s. It caused little aggravation when land was plentiful, and much enclosure took place in the Middle Ages without fuss. The first anti-enclosure legislation took the form of two mild statutes in the thirteenth century, one in 1236 and one in 1285. The last anti-enclosure bill was introduced into the House of Commons in 1656 and was rejected. From 1750 onwards, acts of parliament sanctioned enclosure.

It was not until midway through the nineteenth century that legislation was introduced to preserve land for people's pleasure. This was a big success for the campaign of the Commons Preservation Society, and saved London's open spaces, but it was too late for cities such as Birmingham and Liverpool and too late for thousands of villages. By then, the loss and the consequences were obvious to everyone. The rector of Hitcham, Suffolk, complained:

"how entirely the labourers seem to be without innocent and manly amusements. . . . They have no village green, or common, for active sports. Some thirty years ago, I am told, they had a right to a play-ground in a particular field, at certain seasons of the year, and were then celebrated for their foot-ball; but somehow or other, this right has been lost to them, and the field is now under the plough."

In the 1830s the common at Boxted, Essex, was being leased out as an arable field and part of it served as a gravel pit. The investigator of the north-east for the 1845 Inquiry into the State of Large Towns reported that:

"in Sunderland, as in other towns visited, a strong impression was conveyed to me that the public are deprived of varied rights which at former periods they have been accustomed to enjoy."

Political Football

The records of loss are numerous: ". . . These sports entirely ceased on the enclosure of Chester-ton field." "There are now no common lands belonging to the parish. Formerly there were very extensive grounds of this class; but in 1793 these rights were resumed and the grounds enclosed, but without leaving a single acre for the use of the public." "Wherever there was an open space to which people could have access they would play, but now they are driven from all." Poet laureate Robert Southey said: "All persons . . . speak of old ceremonies and old festivities as things which are obsolete." Hitcham's parson said: "It is the abolition of the old custom that is looked upon as a grievance almost too heavy to be borne with patience": and, indeed, the dispossessed often did not just stand back and watch their land being taken from them. There were several political football matches, such as that in the Isle of Ely in June 1638, when a match provided the excuse for several hundred men to assemble and then destroy the drainage ditches which were part of the enclosures. And

on August 5, 1765, the *Northampton Mercury* reported:

"We hear from West Haddon, in the county, that on Thursday and Friday last a great number of people being assembled there, in order to play a foot-ball match, soon after meeting formed themselves into a tumultuous mob, and pulled up and burnt the fences designed for the inclosure of that field, and did other considerable damage."

This particular enclosure, of 2,000 acres, was passed through parliament in spite of many formal objections, leaving the victims with no alternative but their more informal action. Dragoons, specially drafted from Northampton, could do nothing in the face of such resistance and the damage reported in the *Mercury* was later reckoned to come to £1,500. Though five men were imprisoned, the organisers of the match were not caught.

Three years later, the prolonged resistance to the enclosure of the fenland included the staging of three matches in one month on parts of the disputed ground, though by this time the exercise might have been solely a symbolic gesture of communal defiance. On July 1 about 200 men played for a couple of hours before a troop of dragoons seized some of them, as well as some spectators. Two weeks later another match was played, this time without incident, and then a third, again free of interference, was played at the end of the month. All in vain. In 1838 it was noted: "Football seems to have almost gone out of use with the inclosure of wastes and commons, requiring a wide space for its exercise." Again, in 1824: "Owing to the inclosure of open lands and commons, the poor have no place in which they may amuse themselves in summer evenings, when the labour of the day is over, or when a holiday occurs."

A newspaper in 1844 admitted to "a feeling of regret, when we have seen those pieces of common land, near to small towns and villages, on which the rural sports of generations have been followed, enclosed". The following year saw the first enclosure act which explicitly acknowledged the losses that had often accompanied previous acts of enclosure. It provided for the preservation of surviving village greens for popular diversions and recommended the provision of a playing field in certain cases of the enclosure of waste land. By this time, any kind of open space for recreation was very much at a premium.

Emergent Capitalists and Leisure

Although some commentators lamented the erosion of traditional recreations, the emergent

capitalists applauded it as being of benefit to the national economy, which, they thought, would be strengthened and expanded the more popular diversion could be restrained and controlled.

Glasgow hammermen, when they went on strike in the mid-eighteenth century in an effort to get shorter hours, were told that the leisure time thus created would be spent in the pub with a resulting loss of working efficiency. One scribe criticised the "beggarly pride" of workers who insisted on keeping a dog; another attacked their weakness for "trifling niceties" and their tendency to congregate in public places "upon every occasion of public solemnity" such as at marriages and funerals. Any sign of enjoyment was disapproved of, even the drinking of tea (originally a substitute for beer).

It was during this period that work and leisure came more and more to be polarised, when workers began to discriminate between their "own" time and that which belonged to their bosses, when time began to be spent rather than passed.

In 1697 John Pollexfen had reckoned that each holiday cost the nation £50,000; two generations later the loss was being put at £200,000. By the late eighteenth century it was being suggested that all occasions of popular diversion might be better dispensed with, in the interests of industry, morality and public order.

"Prevention of Idleness"

The whole problem of popular behaviour was commended as a suitable topic for the attention of the nation's leaders. It was early suggested that laws be framed and "a good police" be established, to ensure that the workers "labour six days for the same sum which they now earn in four days". The scribe then says: "What can be more worthy the attention of the legislature than the framing of laws which would tend to make several millions of poor labouring people sober, industrious, frugal, temperate, virtuous, and happy, and the state, in consequence of this, the richest and most powerful in the world?"

He warned, though, that one had to be discreet in applying such laws if work of good quality was to be expected, for "the lower sort of people in England, from a romantic notion of liberty, generally reject and oppose everything that is forced upon them". Subtlety was called for: "The effects of such laws should be produced almost insensibly and without the appearance of force: for force will hardly ever answer the end proposed in this land of liberty."

Taxes on different forms of recreation were suggested, with the intention of "preventing idleness, promoting industry and checking extrava-

gance". They ought to be laid, it was thought:

"On all places of public resort and diversion, such as public rooms, music gardens, play-houses, etc., also on booths and stands for country wakes, cricket matches, and horse racing, stages for mountebanks, cudgel playing, etc., moreover on fives places, and ball courts, billiard tables, shuffle boards, skittle alleys, bowling greens, and cock pits: also capitation taxes should be levied on itinerant players, lottery-men, shew-men, jugglers, ballad singers, and indeed on all others of whatever class or denomination, whose very trades and profession have a natural tendency, and whose personal interest it is to make other people profuse, extravagant, and idle."

That the proponents of business efficiency were able to fit habits of leisure into the requirements of orderly production was due to the vulnerability of workers' culture. This culture was rooted in custom and fertilised by the allowances and concessions made by lords on holidays and feast days in return for work rendered throughout the rest of the year. For the revels, food and drink was provided and fields thrown open. Increasingly, the payment of wages was regarded as the end of all obligation, and the men of property came to have no compunction in ignoring or abrogating such customs.

Resistance was impossible, for they could afford to carry a dispute to the courts, and the victims could not. The victims could invoke "ancient custom" till the cows came home, and did, but a new spirit was in the land, a spirit of written contracts and legal documents, of wealthy men playing Monopoly with estates they had never seen, of eviction and disruption by unknown, and therefore terrifying, economic forces.

The dispossessed crowded into the cities. Their rural culture now had no meaning. Harvest feasts, Plough Monday celebrations, sheep-shearing dinners, the rituals of May Day, the seasonal cycles of agriculture which served as the foundation of the traditional holiday calendar, all were meaningless to factory workers in towns: the rural culture withered and died—and for two or three generations there was nothing to replace it. The people in the hiatus must have been unutterably dazed and confused; shattered by the enormity of the changed circumstances of living and piteously vulnerable. Later generations would build a new life, but it was to be a life conditioned by the despoilers, the victors, and strictly on their terms.

The Fight for Literacy

For working-class people, any act of self-expression or personal development is a leisure activity. Before the Education Act of 1870, learning to read and write was for children and adults such an activity. In the years leading up to 1870 literacy was a political issue, the issue being, would reading and writing lead to rebellion?

Literacy did not, as is often thought, become widespread only after 1870. The Illiterate Age ended in the mid-sixteenth century, when northern Europe, in changing from Catholicism to Protestantism, switched from an image-culture to a word-culture. Before then, a lot of the highest nobles could neither read nor write, the first earl of Rutland being the last illiterate to hold high office in England; after it, people no longer worshipped in an unintelligible language and bowed to numerous saints and gods. Catholicism remained a culture of the image; Protestantism was a culture of the book, of a literate society. Protestants seized on the new invention of the printed book, while Catholics, after initial encouragement, soon realised its subversive potential and turned against it. Protestants whitewashed over the wall-paintings to replace them with the Ten Commandments, written in English. God's people were to be a literate people.

We have seen that as soon as labourers do anything other than labour, the leisured classes become frightened and angry. Accordingly, with literacy came its condemnation. Men of property followed Hobbes in blaming the horrors of the Civil War on excessive education in the pre-war years. Certainly, the demand for pamphlets and newspapers in those years seems to have been insatiable—in 1642, about 2,000 separate pamphlets were published—and the contents of this ephemeral literature were politically sophisticated and remarkably mature. When the worldly educationalist Comenius visited London in 1641, he was amazed at the output of books and the number of bookshops, and he viewed with astonishment the spectacle of church congregations busily making notes of the sermon. Hobbes said that by then many young people had "read the Scriptures once or twice over".

The "Dangers of Knowledge"

After the Restoration came the reaction, for a while fairly successful. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion and obedience" was a favourite principle. "Should a horse know as much as a man, I should not like to be his rider," said Mandeville. Such Canutes were, however, eventually swamped in the rising tide. Restrictions on education were imposed, but the flood of literacy swept on past them, and in the eighteenth century

there was once again a wide public who read numerous pamphlets, ballads and newspapers. In 1726 a visitor from abroad observed that: "All Englishmen are great newsmongers. Workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms in order to read the latest news. I have seen shoe-blacks and persons of that class club together to purchase a farthing newspaper."

Fifty years later this news-hungry, literate working class had grown increasingly restive at the narrow oligarchical framework of political power and had begun to turn to radical politics nurtured on Tom Paine—"Our peasantry now read *The Rights of Man* on mountains and moor-side and by the wayside" was one complaint—and the upper classes again became afraid. Bishop Beilby Porteous said in 1803 that "men of considerable ability say it is safest for both the government and the religion of the country to let the lower classes remain in that state of ignorance in which nature has originally placed them".

Lord Eldon considered the "march of intellect . . . a tune to which one day or the other a hundred thousand tall fellows with clubs and pikes will march against Whitehall". A barrister said (to cries of "Hear, hear") that a forger owed his trip to Botany Bay to the "march of intellect". Essays were written expounding the view that the minds of the poor should not be elevated above their station, and that schemes for an extensive diffusion of knowledge were utopian, injurious and absurd.

As the century progressed, however, more and more scribes, though still seeing the connection, increasingly took the view that education, rather than causing discontent, if controlled by the masters of society would in fact prevent it. This was one aspect of the passing of the Education Act. But it was not state education which prevented a rebellion: that honour goes to alcohol.

Poverty and Drink

Drunkenness was frowned upon by Christianity at least from Anglo-Saxon times. When Charles Lamb said, "Damn temperance and them that invented it," he might have been damning Dunstan, Wulfstan and Anselm, all of whom were temperance reformers. But although drunkenness was attacked by friars in the Middle Ages and by puritans in the seventeenth century, total abstinence was not advocated until the Industrial Revolution. Puritans said that intoxicants could be legitimately used for friendship and "for honest delight"; Milton dreamt of prohibition, but could not help praising wine, while Bunyan denied that the Bible forbids all consumption of alcoholic drinks.

Alcohol was not a serious problem before the Industrial Revolution, because there was hardly any drinking of spirits, because alcohol consumption was controlled by tradition, and because people had other things to enjoy and look forward to. Once rural sports had been suppressed and seasonal festivals had lost their relevance to the working year, what could replace them? "Lounging and boozing in the public house, or playing bowls in the bowling alley," said Joseph Arch. "That was all."

Although Defoe saw the distilling industry as "one of the most essential things to support the landed interest . . . and therefore to be preserved and tenderly used", Fielding, after two years' experience at Bow Street police court, regarded it differently. "Gin is the principal sustenance (if it may be so called) of more than a hundred thousand persons in this metropolis," he said. "Many of these wretches there are, who swallow pints of this poison within the 24 hours; the dreadful effects of which I have the misfortune every day to see, and to smell too." Practically, there was nothing he could do. Every fourth house was a gin shop, open 24 hours a day.

Overcrowding in towns had created new inflections which could be cured by alcohol. It provided protection against the bad air resulting from poor sanitation and lack of ventilation. Gin was thought to cure indigestion, the most common ailment of the poor because of bad or adulterated food, and protect against infection, for few working people were ever totally fit or healthy. It brought relief from the mingled fear, worry, anxiety and foreboding in a situation where the slightest setback meant disaster.

Self-help ideologies, by attributing individual failure to personal inadequacy, did not help matters. The poor tended to share sorrows over a drink instead of giving more constructive help. This was easily done, because drink-sellers were more willing than other tradesmen to extend credit to distressed customers.

Contemporaries observed that enclosure virtually forced labourers into drinking places for their recreation. One radical said: "When the village may-pole fell, and the commons were inclosed, the fiend, intemperance, was ushered into birth."

Such observations were commonplace: "The poor have now no relaxation but the alehouse or the gin palace," "At present, the poor workman in the large manufacturing town is actually forced into the public house, there being no other place for him to amuse himself in," etc., etc.

Drinking places brought harmony into the disordered lives of many bored, exhausted and exploited people; but the harmony was tem-

porary, and next morning the hung-over people were even less capable of alleviating their intolerable boredom, exhaustion and exploitation, and the vicious values of industrial capitalism continued to mock the history of humanity. Although the middle-class members of the temperance movement saw a drunk populace as an impediment to the smooth running of a system which they condoned, the radicals among their working-class colleagues regarded it as an obstacle to the changing of a system which they condemned.

Public Parks

Eventually, in the place of the old unlimited drinking hours, fairs and cruel sports came new recreations with the provision of open spaces, libraries and music halls, though Ruskin in 1877 could still write to workers that: "If I were in your place, I should drink myself to death in six months, because I had nothing to amuse me."

Progress was made in providing towns with open spaces. The appointment of a parliamentary committee on public walks in 1833 shows that some MPs already recognised the existence of the problem; its intimate connection with the drink problem was acknowledged in the parliamentary inquiries of 1834 and 1853-54. But the first moves for improvement were made outside parliament. The earliest park was laid out on Preston Moor in 1833-35; Joseph Strutt, the first historian of English sports and pastimes, gave Derby its Arboretum in 1840; but the most important event was the opening of Manchester's Peel Park in 1846. This was followed by the creation of parks in several other industrial towns. The General Enclosure Act of 1845 restrained the enclosure of common land around London, and Slaney's Recreation Grounds Act of 1852 facilitated bequests of recreational land.

Temperance reformers were intimately involved in all this, Joseph Sturge saying that he believed that the exclusion from green fields "contributed not a little to the demoralisation of many of the working classes", and Joseph Livesey being personally responsible for creating Preston's Avenham Park in 1847. A lot of drink-sellers opposed public parks as damaging to their trade. Some drink-sellers also disliked another counter-attraction pioneered by temperance reformers—the public library. The adoption of an Act enabling towns to support libraries and museums from the rates was opposed by mobs which included "friends of the beer-house interests".

Work and Leisure

Before the Industrial Revolution, in addition to the observance of St. Monday (an unofficial holiday taken every week by most workers), you

see all sorts of non-work activity—singing, drinking, dancing, gossiping, etc.—guiltlessly part of the working day. Work seemed shot through with leisure.

But was it leisure as we know it? Leisure is time devoid of obligation, time to pass as you like. Most of the pre-industrial non-work activities—folk dancing, singing songs together with the unmarried young people of the village, celebrating the day of the shoemakers' patron saint, the baptismal feast—these activities were deeply rooted in custom and habit, according to a set of rules which made up a ritual. The order in which things were done, the words which were spoken, and the reactions which people had were all closely prescribed. With our definition, this can hardly be called leisure. Work obviously does not fit into our definition: but neither does ritual. Ritual is almost as enslaving as work. Pure, unadulterated leisure implies choice.

Tilers and stonemasons drank together during a break; gas fitters and electricians work steadily throughout the day and then drink at their favourite pub when and with whom they choose: peasants sang together in the fields; factory workers do their work and also belong to a band or music club. In both examples the new element is choice. Freedom depends on the number of options open to you. The emergence of leisure is the emergence of freedom.

The price of freedom may be eternal vigilance, but the cost of leisure is such that a lot of people choose to work overtime in their "spare" time. Most men still work over 45 hours a week. Although Clydeside workers struck for a 40-hour week in 1919, and most trade unions have in recent years demanded a 35-hour week, according to a Department of Employment report earlier this year only one group of workers—printers and publishers on periodicals—works less than 40 hours a week, and a House of Lords report of 1973 said that leisure time was the same then as in 1946.

Yet the myth continues that we have more leisure than ever before. All we have is more leisure than the workers in the Industrial Revolution—and that is not difficult, as they had none. Can we expect then that, like the tribes of Israel waiting for Moses to fetch the six-day week down from Mount Sinai, we shall have to wait a bit for our four-day week? It looks like it.

The emergence of leisure as a phenomenon totally divorced from work has led to sociologists, mainly French and American, regarding it as a subject fit for study and debate. The debate concerns whether we should accept the impossibility of industrial work ever being able to satisfy our basic spiritual needs and that therefore we should

seek these satisfactions in our leisure, or should we try to change things so that work can be made to be fulfilling?

Working Class and Leisure

The adherents of the former maintain that life is split into compartments; work is separate from leisure, production from consumption, workplace from residence, education from religion, politics from recreation. From this point of view comes the opinion that leisure can compensate for a boring job, that if work cannot provide "nourishment", then maybe leisure can. Adherents of the latter viewpoint hold that life is an integrated whole, every part of which affects and is affected by every other part. They say that attitudes and practices developed in one sphere can spill over into another—killing time at work can become killing time in leisure, apathy in the workplace can become apathy in politics, alienation from the one, alienation from the other.

It is surely a pipe dream to imagine that life can be compartmentalised as envisaged by the first lot. As R. H. Tawney has said: "The capacity of human beings to departmentalise themselves is surprising but not unlimited."

Another recent development is that leisure has become part of official government policy, with a special ministry, White Papers and noises of approval rather than condemnation.

Remember that the masters of industrial capital destroyed everything which did not fit into their brave new world, including the most important impediment to their ambitions, the people's old meanings and values, their customs and spirit—in short, their culture. We lost our culture less than 200 years ago. Can we be complacent in assuming that we have built another, as satisfactory as the one we lost?

When the new working class started to build another, the rulers suppressed it as they had suppressed the traditional culture, allowing and encouraging only interests and activities consistent with the rulers' well-being. When the London Mechanics' Institute began, Thomas Hodgskin was campaigning for tuition in "the science of the production and distribution of wealth". The modern science of economics was expanding, and knowledge was available about the national income and how unequally it was distributed. Hodgskin was repeatedly stopped from giving lectures on this subject by the middle-class people who had moved in on the institute with their patronage and subscriptions. Eventually he spoke four times along these lines, then he was stopped and compelled in future to speak of other things. He was finally replaced, and the newspapers gleefully reported "clean, respectable-looking

mechanics" listening attentively to lectures on chemistry.

This sort of thing happened all the time. Certainly, the network of working men's clubs has been built up, and among the working class generally attitudes of helping and co-operation prevail rather than the bourgeois values of competition and individualism; but the leisure activities of the vast majority of people are drinking, reading the *Sun* or the *Daily Mirror* and watching ITV. The statement of this central fact of leisure does not necessarily have to be a moral judgment, except that all the while this state of affairs continues they are not going to make a revolution.

Sometimes, they are simply too exhausted even to potter around in the garden or tinker at some hobby. But not all the time. They are inert also because they have been destroyed spiritually; sufficiently educated to do their work and follow *News at Ten* and *Dad's Army*, but not educated enough to demand better information or entertainment. The trouble is, the absence of a policy on leisure allows a commercially based anarchy of entertainment to flourish. It will be argued that people are free to choose, and most happen to choose passive forms of relaxation—but can impotent, incoherent people ever really know any sort of freedom other than the aimless freedom of an atom in space?

Charles Dickens said, regarding cheap fiction: "The English are, so far as I know, the hardest-worked people on whom the sun shines. Be content if in their wretched intervals of leisure they read for amusement and do no worse. They are born at the oar, and they live and die at it. Good God, what would we have of them!"

We would have of them a revolution.

For Shorter Hours

You might think that his first sentence no longer applies. You would be wrong. The English, along with the Scots and the Welsh, have only seven bank holidays a year, fewer than any other country in the world (Northern Ireland has eight): in the European mechanical engineering industry only in Luxembourg are there longer working hours than here. Italians in the industry work over 10 per cent less hours annually than the British: total holiday entitlement is generally worse in Britain than the rest of Europe, in spite of improvements made here in recent years.

May Day is a public holiday in a lot of countries, including Italy, West Germany and France and, of course, all the socialist countries. Of public holidays generally, France, Norway, Luxembourg and Belgium have ten; Sweden and Denmark have eleven; West Germany has ten to

13, differing in the regions; Italy has 17. Even India, that poorest of poor nations, has far more public holidays than our puny seven (because the holidays of all the religions are taken by everyone regardless of their religion).

Dickens' sentence cannot even be dismissed with a sneer that while at work people do not work. Productivity has increased in recent years, in some industries dramatically. Between 1965 and 1973, productivity increased by 24.8 per cent. Eighty people were producing in 1973 what took 100 people in 1965.

The two problems, inadequate leisure and sappy leisure, have both been recognised by the trade union movement. In recent years most unions have claimed a 35-hour working week, the Boilermakers' Society moving a resolution at last year's TUC that:

"Congress once again stresses the necessity to establish a 35-hour working week within all industries.

"In acceptance, therefore, of this principle, affiliated unions shall seek to demand from employers with whom they negotiate the need to set a terminal date within which the intention can be established towards the achievement of reducing the present 40-hour week to the 35-hour week."

A composite resolution moved by the TGWU at the 1972 Congress and carried unanimously, called for "a working week of 35 hours in all industries with a further target of a 32-hour, four-day week without loss of earnings". Going on to demand longer holidays, increased public holidays and earlier retirement, it stressed that "these must be seen as a means to greater leisure".

What Sort of Leisure?

Progress is slow, though. A Liverpool engineer said in a letter to the *Morning Star* in March that he was "puzzled by the low priority given by the engineering union to its 35-hour week claim".

As for the fight to eradicate sappy leisure, resolution 42 was passed at the 1960 Conference: "Congress," it said, "... notes that the trade union movement has participated to only a small extent in the direct promotion and encouragement of plays, films, music, literature and other forms of expression including those of value to its beliefs and principles. This Congress considers that much more could be done and accordingly requests the General Council to conduct a special examination and to make proposals to a future congress to ensure a greater participation by the trade union movement in all cultural activities."

This followed a statement from the TUC General Council of 1946, which said:

"The function of trade unionism does not end with securing the worker improvements as regards his conditions of work. . . . Beyond day-to-day questions it is concerned with seeing that the worker has the widest opportunity for a full life, and if there are respects in which facilities available to him for the use and enjoyment of his leisure can be improved, in pursuing such improvement. There is another sense in which the movement has a direct interest in leisure. In so far as it relies for its strength on a conscious community of interest and aspiration, it is concerned that the mass of the population shall not be merely passive recipients of provided entertainments and pastimes. Mental inertia is the greatest enemy of trade unionism, as of democracy generally. We are, therefore, concerned that people should be alive and critical in their appreciation of and participation in social activities of all kinds."

Visions of the Future

All visions of an ideal society have the inhabitants doing as little work as possible. Thomas More and Peter Cornelis Plockhoy thought six hours a day ideal; Campanella, four hours; Gerrard Winstanley, none after the age of 40; John Bellers, "only an easie days work"; Marx said the test of a civilisation is the shortness of its working day; William Morris thought you should do only what you want to do, for as long as you want to do it.

Leisure is at the moment often seen as a problem. Surely, then, to talk of more leisure is to talk of an even bigger problem? It depends on the sort of society the future holds.

While things continue as they are, I do not believe that the money men will ever allow people to have three days a week free from their clutches. The unions win such concessions, and then capitalism enters one of its periodic crises, and people have to work overtime or take a second job in order to live. Capitalism is not a benevolent society. And anyway, what "free" time we do have is debased, the "freedom" being constrained by inadequate money, low cultural expectations and limitations in skill, education, aspiration or information. If leisure is a problem in capitalist Britain, it is because the purpose of leisure, the regeneration of people, is denied.

The alternative, a socialist Britain, presupposes that to make the revolution millions of people took up duties, obligations and responsibilities in their "free" time. Such activities will be continued

after the revolution—and so you find a return to the blurring of distinction between work, obligation and leisure prevalent before the Industrial Revolution.

When Work is a Pleasure

As William Morris so clearly said in *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*, work will have hope in it. "What is the nature of the hope which, when it is present in work, makes it worth doing?" he asked.

"It is threefold, I think—hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself; and hope of these also in some abundance and of good quality; rest enough and good enough to be worth having. . . .

"I have put the hope of rest first because it is the simplest and most natural part of our hope. Whatever pleasure there is in some work, there is certainly some pain in all work, the beast-like pain of stirring up our slumbering energies to action, the beast-like dread of change when things are pretty well with us; and the compensation for this animal pain is animal rest. We must feel while we are working that the time will come when we shall not have to work. Also the rest, when it comes, must be long enough to allow us to enjoy it; it must be longer than is merely necessary for us to recover the strength we have expended in working. . . ."

Some industrial work will always be grotty, but workers in these industries will be regarded as heroes of labour and rewarded accordingly, both in money and leisure, unlike, say, the miners

in Britain today who have had to fight for every extra penny in pay and for every extra minute of leisure, being constantly reviled by handsomely-paid newspaper hacks.

The key to satisfying leisure is found in work. What people demand of leisure depends on what they find or do not find in their work, and on what the education they have received has made them. Having said this, it is necessary to add that the quality of even the most mundane things in leisure will have risen after the revolution. Think how nice it will be to go out for the day and not be cheated by crook caterers; to buy an ice-cream and not get iced animal fat; to go to a football match and see a game of football and not fight-ball. The constant chatter of the advertisers will have ceased. Films will not only be about Americans killing each other. Performers lacking in talent will not dominate any branch of entertainment. Society, indeed, will be radically different. At the moment, honesty is not the West policy: cheating extends to every activity. This will be changed, in leisure as in everything else.

William Morris visualised and described this sort of society very clearly. He said:

"I hope that we shall have leisure from war—war commercial, as well as war of the bullet and the bayonet; leisure from the knowledge that darkens counsel; leisure above all from the greed of money, and the craving for that overwhelming distinction that money now brings: I believe that as we have even now partly achieved Liberty, so we shall one day achieve Equality, which, and which only, means Fraternity, and so have leisure from poverty and all its griping, sordid cares."

Review Article:

"Marxism and Modern Social Theory"

Alan Hunt

(The author is Assistant Dean of Middlesex Polytechnic)

The 1970s are witnessing a veritable explosion of interest in Marxism. This is particularly apparent in the social sciences. Very few books

Alan Swingewood: "Marx and Modern Social Theory." Macmillan (London, 1975), £6.95 hardback, £2.95 paperback.

appear that are not concerned in one way or another with a discussion of Marxist social theory. The barrenness and sterility of the traditional empiricist and positivist obsessions of British social science with minutiae, which took delight in pretending that Marx never existed, or could be written off as having been "superseded",

has passed away. This resurgence of interest in Marxism is one of the exciting features of the period; but it is not without its own difficulties.

Alan Swingewood has attempted a very important and, it should be freely admitted, a very difficult task; that of discussing the relationship between Marxist social theory and the most important trends within 20th-century sociology. He attempts the very ambitious undertaking of discussing the relationship between Marxist social theory and the grand tradition of bourgeois social thought in its various forms as represented by Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Karl Mannheim and Talcott Parsons; in addition, he seeks to deal with some of the more recent manifestations as expressed in phenomenological and critical sociology. If this is not a big enough task he also has a lot to say about important figures within the Marxist tradition, in particular Lukács and Gramsci.

The Debate Within Marxism

The difficulty in such an undertaking does not consist simply in the scope and range of the discussion. The greatest difficulty is that it is not possible to embark on it without entering into the debate and discussion *within Marxism*, about what are the distinctive and most central features of Marxist social theory. In certain historical periods it appeared possible to treat Marxism as a given body of theory which could be applied to a subject under discussion. Such an approach was characterised by interpretations of Marx that tended to be mechanical. The very important expansion in the publication of Marx's writings in English and their wider dissemination has created a much more open discussion in which all those who regard themselves as Marxists have been engaged in discussion about the nature of Marx's social theory.

This debate has contradictory features. On the one hand it reflects a healthy and vigorous dynamic within Marxist theory, but on the other hand it frequently manifests itself in an over self-conscious and abstruse theoretical confrontation which becomes the prerogative of a self-styled *élite* of "Marxist intellectuals". But it is important to insist that, however obscure and infuriating this debate sometimes becomes, it has an importance which cannot be brushed aside.

Against this background it is almost impossible for anyone undertaking a study with such broad terms of reference as those which Alan Swingewood sets for himself to be entirely successful. What is most important about this book, and will be especially useful for anyone coming into contact with the social sciences, is the way in which the nature of Marx's social theory is

discussed in terms of the most important trends in the historical development of sociology. Particularly impressive is his discussion of Weber in the way that he demonstrates the very extensive influence that Weber has had, not only on the main trends of bourgeois social theory but also upon key figures writing in the Marxist tradition, especially Lukács and Marcuse. He demonstrates that the Marxism against which Weber reacted was its mechanical interpretation prevalent in the German Social-Democratic Party at the turn of the century, which, Swingewood argues, had little in common with Marx's own social theory. Many of the apparently telling points that Weber made against mechanical Marxism cannot validly be raised against Marxist theory, but these nevertheless had a profound effect upon the attitude to Marxism manifest in academic sociology, at least up until the very recent period.

An Unreal Debate

The linking theme of Swingewood's discussion is to show the extent to which the whole history of sociology can be understood as a "debate with the ghost of Marx". The extent to which this is explicit in the writings of the sociologists varies. But what is a common feature of this debate is that it has generally been an unreal debate; it has been a debate directed against the supposedly mechanical or deterministic character of Marx's thought.

This interpretation of Marx has arisen not simply through dishonesty on the part of sociologists (although in the case of some "critics" of Marx it is difficult not to feel a malevolent and dishonest intent, for example, in the case of people like Popper and Plamenatz). Frequently the charge of determinism has been made possible by the form which Marxist theory took in the period after Marx's death. Swingewood, like a number of other commentators, places considerable responsibility at the feet of Engels; but the main distortion he sees in the influence of Kautsky, Plekhanov and Bukharin. This mechanical interpretation of Marxism, he argues, pervaded the Marxism of the Stalin period with its consequent effect on the world Communist movement.

Thus the heart of Swingewood's discussion is to be found in his discussion of Marxist theory itself. The fact that it is possible for different writers to arrive at apparently contradictory conclusions while claiming to be faithful to Marxism occurs because the different writers place their primary emphasis upon different elements within Marx's theory. The recent period has seen a considerable revitalisation of discussion around the question of "what constitutes the essential features of Marx's theory?".

This reinvigoration of discussion within Marxism is to be welcomed, although it has to be noted that much of this discussion has taken place in very rarified and abstruse terms. One of Swingewood's merits is that, although his book is by no means simple and therefore requires quite concentrated reading, he generally avoids lapsing into obscurity. One further feature of the contemporary debate should be noted, and that is that there is a considerable degree of *openness* in the debate. The openness arises from the fact that it is today less possible for any individual, group or party to claim a monopoly of the truth in the interpretation of Marx. Swingewood's discussion is very much part of this renewed endeavour to re-establish the essential core of Marxist theory.

Marxism as Method

He stresses two features which are for him central to Marx's social theory. The first of these is that Marxism must be viewed as a *method* whereby the complex social world is to be approached in order that it may be understood as a necessary precondition for social and political action to change it.

This stress on "Marxism as method" needs to be seen in contrast to tendencies which focus upon Marxism as a set of "social laws", which Swingewood argues is most pronounced in the Stalinist version of Marxism. If Marx is interpreted as a theory which has discovered a set of laws, social inquiry is reduced to the mere application of pre-established laws. Marxism is thereby reduced to a body of doctrine that can be learnt and applied directly to real social, economic and political problems. As a body of "doctrine" it is liable to be reduced to a system of dogma.

On the other hand, if Marxism is regarded fundamentally as a "method", its merit is that it provides us with assistance in approaching the real world; but it does not necessarily contain ready-made the solutions to new problems, or for that matter to old ones, which the complex reality of the social world throws up. The distinctive feature of Marxist methodology lies in the equal emphasis it places on two elements which in non-Marxist theory are usually regarded as opposites. Thus on the one hand Marx is insistent on the empirical focus of his theory; that is that what is analysed is society in its concrete manifestations at historically specific periods, it is not concerned with "society in general". Yet at the same time it is intensely theoretical in the sense it brings to bear certain concepts, or, as Marx usually referred to them as "abstractions", as the means of analysing the concrete social world.

Such central concepts as "surplus value" and

"mode of production" are the key theoretical concepts by means of which historically specific social phenomena are to be analysed. In this emphasis upon the revolutionary significance of Marx's theoretical concepts the author's position is very close to that of Althusser, although in most other respects, although not referred to by name, he exhibits much hostility to Althusserian positions.

This parallel insistence upon the interrelationship of theoretical concepts and empirical analysis finds its expression in Marx's method of analysis which takes the form of constantly moving back and forward between the whole or totality of society and its empirical parts. But the starting point is the "totality" (in his emphasis on the fact that Marxist theory is concerned with the "totality" he leans heavily upon Lukács, although in almost every other respect he is heavily critical of what he regards as the almost metaphysical tendencies in Lukács); this emerges clearly in the structure of *Capital* in which the totality which forms its subject matter is "the capitalist mode of production", which in Volume I has a generally abstract presentation, but which by Volume III, through the process of making successive approximations to reality, comes to take on a more concrete existence. It is these characteristics which constitute the "dialectical methodology" which provides the revolutionary force of Marxist theory.

The Concept of "Praxis"

The second element upon which Swingewood lays the greatest stress as the distinguishing feature of Marx's social theory is the concept of "praxis". The word "praxis" has achieved a certain vogue in recent years. One often suspects that those that use the term do so without any very clear understanding of its meaning, but with the intention of lending a little "Marxist respectability" to otherwise mundane utterances. Swingewood certainly rises well above this level, but he does have a tendency to rely rather too heavily upon it to solve all problems that confront Marxist theory.

He defines "praxis" as "purposive social activity". The most persistent criticism that has been made of Marxist theory is that it is determinist in that the sense that Marx places upon the determinant role of economic forces and processes has the effect of rendering human action as the passive bearer or transmitter of these forces and consequentially only having marginal ability to influence these inexorable economic processes. The most general feature of bourgeois sociology, usually explicitly reacting against the alleged "determinism" of Marxism, has been to emphasise subjective quality of social action, as being made

up of conscious, purposeful action of individuals.

The main thrust of Swingewood's argument is that this concern with the subjective dimension of social action is not alien to Marxism. The bourgeois theorists have frequently been reacting against determinist interpretations of Marx, which Marxists themselves have had some responsibility in creating. Yet Marxist concern with the subjective dimension is not the same as that most prevalent in bourgeois theory, where the starting point has been with the isolated individual or social "actor". Central for Marxism is the question of consciousness. But he is very insistent that class-consciousness is held and transmitted only by and through individuals. He warns of the danger of speaking of "proletarian class-consciousness" as something disembodied or as a quality mysteriously incorporated in "the party" irrespective of the particular forms and levels of consciousness held by the members of the class itself.

Marxism is not determinism. While there are formulations in Marx's writing that would suggest it, the most important tenet is the insistence that people make their own history.

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."¹

People are thus both determined and determining. Here, he argues, lies the central dialectical quality of Marx's theory which is captured in the concept "praxis". On this basis he proceeds to argue the importance for Marxism, both theoretically and politically, of the purposive quality of social activity. Thus Marxist concern with questions of ideology and class-consciousness are basically about the manner and forms that social purposes are formed and struggled over. The structures of power and domination provide the context and forms in which these struggles are fought out.

Marx—Young and Old

Praxis is also important for Swingewood in another respect. Ever since the publication of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* there has been debate about the relationship between the "young" and "mature" Marx. Swingewood takes the position that it is too simple to suggest that there is a simple continuity in Marx's writing. But he is also anxious to reject

the view (most closely associated with Althusser) that there is a major distinction ("epistemological break") between two periods of Marx's work. He argues that the concept of "praxis", which is present in the early writings, provides the link between the early and the latter writings. But whereas in the early works alienation was an abstract concept, in the later writings, in the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, in the form of "fetishism" and "reification", alienation is presented concretely as residing within the capitalist mode of production itself. This analysis is perhaps too simple, for, while it is true that in the *Manuscripts of 1844* the form is abstract and thus philosophical, Marx's writing does have a concrete reference to the process of social production; and further it is a little too convenient to argue that the concepts of fetishism and reification are simply the filling-out of the earlier notion of alienation. In general some caution is needed in making any one of Marx's concepts do service in resolving what is likely to remain a persistent theme of Marxist discussion.

Swingewood has therefore provided a study which it has already been suggested will have particular value for those concerned with the discussions and arguments within the social sciences. But it also has a wider value in that it presents some of the most important debates within Marxist study in a manner that avoids the worst theorising of some of those currently locked in struggle, in an ever more inaccessible language. But two further more particular points are called for. One of the weaknesses of his discussion of bourgeois sociology is that he concentrates too much on comparing it with Marxism simply at the level of theory. He devotes insufficient attention to analysing the social and historical roots of the particular forms of sociological theory. But in saying this it is worth while to stress the difficulty involved in such an undertaking. There is great temptation to lapse into over-simple characterisations by, for example, arguing that a particular theorist represents "capitalism in decline" or "monopoly capitalist interests". Finally, it is perhaps unfortunate that Swingewood tends to be somewhat sectarian in his attitude to the most recent trends in sociology, usually labelled as "radical sociology". He speaks too sharply of their "ultimate failure" (p. 226), for, while the criticisms that he makes of Gouldner and Birnbaum are perfectly valid, he fails to recognise both the theoretical and political significance of the scores of writers who today, having been brought up within the bourgeois social sciences, are conscientiously striving to grapple with Marxism in order to become truly radical and

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¹ Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 247 (1958).

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Political Report of the Egyptian Communist Party

In recent months information has been published in the Arab world concerning the formation of an Egyptian Communist Party. In July 1975 the Central Secretariat of this organisation issued a Political Report which set out the views of the party on some aspects of the situation in Egypt. This report was subsequently published in the Lebanese paper, As Safir, in August and has now been translated into English.

Because of the situation which exists in Egypt, the Egyptian Communist Party has been formed in illegality, and consequently there is no detailed information about it available, nor the names of any of its leading personnel. It is not known, for example, whether any of the members of the former Communist groups, including the Communist Party which announced its dissolution in 1964, are members of the new organisation.

We are publishing this Political Report, however, as we think it will be of interest to our readers.

In the recent period world imperialism and local reaction have suffered a series of defeats in the military fields and in the economic and political fields. Day after day, the people and the forces of progress and nationalism have achieved one victory after another and wrested one position after another from the enemy.

There have been the crushing defeat of American imperialism in Vietnam, the destruction of the military dictatorship in Greece, the abolition of the fascist régime in Portugal, the end of the rule of the client-Emperor of Ethiopia, the failure of the imperialist plan against the legitimate Makarios Government in Cyprus, the overwhelming success of the Italian Communist Party in the regional elections, the growing contradictions within the Atlantic Alliance, the spread of unemployment and the increasing economic crisis in the capitalist world and the greater scope of the revolutionary area in Latin America.

But the ruling authorities in Egypt insist on going against the current of history, clinging to the road of reaction and going step by step backwards in every field.

The National Cause

The ruling authorities are pledged to the American role in the region, and are determined to see an American solution to the crisis. They are gradually recognising the State of Israel and preparing for coexistence with the State of Israel in the area. They do not rule out a separate, partial solution with Israel in exchange for some kilometres of desert in Sinai.

In Foreign Policy

More and more the ruling authorities are abandoning the "strategic alliance" with the

Soviet Union. They instigate campaigns against the Soviet Union and weaken Egypt's relations with the countries of the socialist camp.

They are actively whitewashing American imperialism, calling its role in wrecking peace prospects and its imperialist provocations against popular revolutions "activities in the service of peace and world detente", and presenting the USA as a loyal friend of Egypt and the Arabs.

They are reinforcing their relations with régimes which act as imperialist agents, such as the Iranian régime. Further they intend to send an official friendly mission to Chile, thus co-operating in helping the fascist junta in that country out of its isolation.

In Arab Policy

Their co-operation with the reactionary Arab régimes is on the increase, and the Cairo-Riyad axis has been established. At the same time their relations with Syria are stagnating, they are retreating in their relations with the Palestinian resistance and the clash with Libya is continuing.

The tendency towards abandoning their national commitments is increasing.

They hide the manoeuvres of imperialism and reaction against the unity of Lebanon and against the Palestinian resistance, taking a neutral stand between reaction on one side and the national democratic forces and the Palestinian resistance on the other.

On the Question of Democracy

They suppress the popular movements such as those of the military factory workers on January 1, 1975, of the Mehalla (textile) workers, those of the fellaheen of Dekernes, and others.

They carry on with their war of attrition

against the forces of the left, with repeated arrests among them in Egypt.

The progressive press is being strangled: the review *Al Katib*, the limitations on *Al Tali'a*, the discontinuance of the publication of Mansourah University.

The leading posts in the press are given to right-wing elements while the left-wing journalists are being scattered.

The choice of the Council of the Union of Journalists for the journalists' representation at the Higher Press Council is ignored.

The students' programme which was decided on by the General Congress of Egyptian Students is ignored. A programme is imposed on them which invalidates the students' democratic rights and increases the control over the students' movement.

Many progressive elements are struck off the list of candidates for membership of the Socialist Union.

In the Social and Economic Fields

The estimated investments of the private sector rose from £E30 million in 1974 to £E100 million in 1975.

The private sector has been allowed to own oil tankers up to a capacity of 40,000 tons, as well as cargo ships of a capacity up to 15,000 tons, passenger ships and a share of inland passenger transport.

The maximum amount for transactions between the government and contractors of the private sector has been raised from £E100,000 to £E500,000.

Contractors and consultants now enjoy the same tax exemptions as Arab capital and foreign capital.

The Egyptian private sector has been granted the same privileges as other Arab investors.

The sale of shares of public sector companies is allowed as well as the liquidation of public sector units or their sale to the private sector. This also applies to the big commercial firms which used to be state-owned.

There is a tendency to abolish public institutions and to break up the public sector under the guise of the independence of each economic unit.

Foreigners and Arabs have been allowed to own land in Egypt, infringing Egypt's sovereignty over her territory, causing an enormous increase in land prices and therefore leading to future rent increases.

There is a trend towards lower taxation on higher incomes in order to encourage foreign investment.

The monopolist multinational companies have had the door opened to them by means of the permission to form joint ventures.

Firms of commercial representatives have been allowed to resume their activities.

Foreign banks have been allowed to deal again in the Egyptian money market with the resulting threat of unfair competition with Egyptian banks. Banks jointly owned by Egyptians and foreigners have been established, a fact which will make it easier for foreign banks to dominate Egypt banking.

There has been the creation of the parallel market and there is a trend towards the gradual transfer of Egyptian commodities to the free zone.

In the course of the year 1973-74 twelve agreements were concluded with foreign oil companies, eleven of which were American.

The Agrarian Reform Law has been revised in order to raise agricultural rents. Tenant farmers can now be expelled and sharecropping is again allowed. The arbitration committees have been abolished.

The law on foreign investments exempts foreign companies from observance of the labour laws.

Efforts are being made to link the Egyptian economy with the imperialist economic blocs (such as the European Economic Community).

These trends and consecutive measures must raise a number of important questions:

Are we nearing a sudden counter-revolution? Has there been a change in the class character of the ruling authority in Egypt? Has the ruling authority lost its national character?

A scientific, precise answer to these questions is imperative in order to end the present circumstances.

The Line Established Since May 15, 1971

The reality is that what is taking place in Egypt is the logical, natural result of the line firmly followed by the ruling authority since May 15, 1971.

On that date the Nasserist left was struck a strong blow. This Nasserist left represented the bureaucratic bourgeoisie which was linked with and benefited from the nationalisation measures and the leading role of the public sector. Following the attack on the Nasserist left, the ruling authority carried out a class alliance in which the principal classes and sections were the following:

1. The rural bourgeoisie (the rich in rural areas), whose cadres dominated most of the leading posts in the Socialist Union and the majority of seats in the National Assembly (Sayed Mar'ei, Mohammed Hamed Mahmud, Youssef Makadi, Mahmud Abu Wafia, Ahmed Younes, Mohammed Osman Ismail, Ahmed al Qasbi, etc.).
2. The upper sections of top bureaucrats and

technocrats in the state apparatus, in the public sector and in the political organisms. These sections have privileges such as high salaries, representation allowances, bonuses, commissions, embezzlements and bribes. They accumulated money which they invested in commercial, industrial or parasitic activities. They linked their interests to those of the private sector and became resentful of the limits imposed on private enterprise. They look forward to the opening up to Western capital as an opportunity to receive the commissions usually granted by capitalist firms.

3. Big capital—commercial, landed or parasitic—which achieves quick profits, not from productive activities, but through speculation, black market transactions and trade in smuggled goods.

In its struggle against the Nasserite left, this alliance tried at the start to neutralise the Marxist left by appointing some Marxists to leading posts in the Socialist Union and in the ministries. The ruling alliance also tried a *rapprochement* with the older social sections and classes which had been affected by the nationalisations and the sequestrations. In a number of cases it was decided to exempt some of their cadres from the rules on sequestration.

New Forces Supporting the Ruling Alliance

After the war of October 1973, especially after Kissinger's visit to the region, and the signing of the first agreement on the disengagement of the armed forces and the adoption of policies based on an American solution and economic liberalism, new social forces joined the ruling alliance:

1. Big capitalist contractors whose representative, Osman Mohammed Osman, became responsible for housing and reconstruction.

2. The traditional big capitalists and landowners who had been affected by the legislation on nationalisation and sequestration, as well as the agents who had traditionally acted as agents of American imperialism.

3. New comprador elements appeared within the ranks of the ruling alliance among the sons, brothers and relatives of holders of top state posts. They became directors of big monopoly firms and started to play the part of brokers for these companies.

These changes in the ruling alliance were the result of a number of economic and political factors, the most important of which are:

1. The fact that the big landowners and the feudal families were allowed to sell their excess land in accordance with the land reform legislation led to a large development of the rural bourgeoisie.

2. Larger and larger numbers among the middle bourgeoisie, and especially the trading bourgeoisie,

became very prosperous and joined the ranks of the higher bourgeoisie due to the enormous profits they achieved by means of speculation, the black market and other illegal activities such as contraband. They exploited the public sector, buying goods produced by the public sector and selling them at high prices. There was no attempt to take measures to prevent or prohibit the development of these social sections.

3. Because of the nationalisation and sequestration measures taken since July 1961—measures which did not touch the substance of capitalist relations in our society—the Egyptian bourgeoisie transferred its investments into non-productive, parasitic fields which were not covered by the nationalisation decrees, such as estate properties, taxis, service trade, speculation, furnished apartments, etc. By such means the bourgeoisie managed to develop and to extend its economic influence.

4. Increasing numbers of bureaucrats and technocrats have linked their class interests with private enterprise and taken part in joint projects with private enterprise.

5. Inter-marriage between members of the old owning families and the families of the ruling alliance has become very prevalent and has led of course to close class links.

6. The old right wing and the Nasserist right wing have exerted greater and greater pressure against any trend towards independent development and for putting the clock back:

(a) By trying to exploit the crisis of the Nasser régime after the defeat of 1967 (Zakariya Muhieddine asked the Higher Executive Council to put a halt to development, to expand the private sector and to open up the economy).

(b) By trying to use their opportunities after the death of Nasser (the attempt to revive the Revolutionary Council and to transfer all authority to it: the notorious report submitted to Sadat, etc.).

(c) By using the gains made in the October war to the advantage of the right wing (the open call to discredit Abdel Nasser, to liquidate the July revolution, to abolish the public sector and the gains made by the working class and the peasants, etc.).

The manoeuvres of the right wing in 1967 failed because of the popular upsurge on June 9 and 10, and the resistance of Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Nasserist left wing. But the Nasserist régime at that time made certain concessions to the right wing which helped to strengthen it, such as the permission given in 1968 to the private sector to export all goods other than the traditional export goods. The value of the goods exported by the private sector rose to £E4,370,000

in 1967-68, an increase of £E1,716,000 over 1966-67.

7. After the disappearance of Nasser from the scene, the split in the ranks of the ruling group turned against the interests of the Nasserist left. The reasons were that the Nasserist left had no firm roots among the popular masses and that it resolved to settle its accounts with the centre and the right wing without having to rely on popular support.

8. By taking credit for the October war the ruling authority found it easier to engage on its own policy step by step.

9. Since the October war, American imperialism has actively pursued its aims. It has managed to secure for its reactionary agents their return to some of their old positions (there was the return of Ali and Mustafa Amine and Ahmed Abul Fath to the press, the return of groups of Moslem Brethren from abroad without penalty, the reappearance of old faces such as Zohair Garrana, Saba Habashi, etc.).

On the Question of the Nationalism of the Régime and Our Attitude Towards It

Day by day it becomes clearer that the ruling authority is deviating from the progressive nationalist line of the Nasser régime, that it is reversing the social and economic steps of the July revolution, that it is ruining the gains of the popular masses and that it is strengthening its links with the world capitalist system.

But does this mean that the ruling authority in Egypt has slipped down to becoming an agent which would impose on us the duty of struggling to get rid of it?

In reality, in assessing the ruling authority and our attitude towards it, we must beware of two extremist attitudes: of ultra-leftism which would uphold the view that the ruling authority as a whole has betrayed the national cause, and would therefore call for its downfall; and of right-wing extremism which blinds itself to the continuous changes in the characteristics of the ruling authority, the changes aiming at a balance of forces between the members of the ruling alliance, to its increasing links with imperialist policies in the region, and which would consider the authority as a whole as being nationalist.

Both extremist attitudes spring from ignoring the reality of things, from ignoring the fact that the ruling alliance includes numerous social classes and sections which are not homogeneous.

Some of these have in fact become traitors and agents.

Others, typical of the characteristic national bourgeoisie, look for a truce with imperialism, try to find a middle-of-the-road solution with it,

dream of playing the part of junior partners of imperialism in the region. They are under the influence of their fear of the political and social consequences of a prolonged war against imperialism and Israel, of the consequences of such a war on the class struggle, and of the increasingly progressive role of the Palestinian resistance in the Arab nation.

But the ruling alliance also includes sections which, in varying degrees, believe in the Nasserist nationalist line. These endeavour to maintain this line, doing so, however, without reaching the point of clash with the ruling alliance.

It is our duty to differentiate between the attitudes of the various sections of the alliance, and to reveal the contradictions between them. Though these contradictions are on the whole of a secondary character, we cannot ignore them or their importance since they have sometimes necessitated political purges affecting leading figures in the alliance (the removal of Aziz Sidky and his group, then of the Aziz Hegazi group).

At the same time we must not forget the fact that the forces which are increasing their influence within the alliance are the agents and partisans of a truce, while the weight and influence of the nationalist forces (in the alliance) are diminishing.

National Forces Within the Ruling Authority

To fight the whole ruling group as a traitor group and to call for its downfall in such circumstances would be an attitude which would almost ignore the fact that there are still nationalist sections and elements within the ruling group. It would also ignore the fact of the hesitant nature of some of its sections. At the moment they follow the ruling trend towards an understanding with imperialism and Zionism; but they would change this attitude tomorrow if Israeli and American rigidity remain unchanged and if the Arab masses, locally and in the Arab region, succeed in opposing the surrender plans and paralyse them.

Even supposing that the ruling authority, whatever its intentions, reaches complete agreement with the Zionist and American imperialist enemies, the positions of the various sections, in such a case, will reflect their contradictions, their struggles and their respective weight.

Within the USA there are forces which strive to settle the problem in such a way as to enable the US to rely on Israel for the defence of American interests in the region and to rely also on friendly Arab régimes at the same time. Other forces in the US are for supporting Israel and Zionism and no one else.

In Israel there are extreme Zionists who cannot consider any moderate solution, whatever the

size of the concessions made by the Arabs.

In Egypt, the ruling authority cannot possibly leave out of account entirely the nationalist trend within the military forces and the reaction of the popular masses in Egypt and in the Arab world to an agreement of surrender. The credit that the ruling authority has attributed to itself for the October war is evaporating day by day, and its ability to persist on the road of concessions is diminishing with the passing of time. At the same time the serious economic crisis of world capitalism in general, and particularly of American capitalism, is bound to restrict the advantages that the ruling authority hopes to obtain from its links with the USA and from opening up its economy to the West; many dreams of those who are backing the American horse will be shattered.

For the future, to ignore the slippery slope down which the ruling authority is dragging the country, or to try to defend a policy of stepping backward and turning the clock back, or to justify the measures or steps taken by the ruling authority, or to represent the alliance as a whole as a nationalist alliance, would be tantamount to a "suivist" (tailist?) right-wing policy.

Our duty is to reveal and expose any step or attitude aiming at reversing the nationalist line or the gains of the workers and peasants.

At a time when the régime is moving away from the progressive nationalist line, to stress its nationalism can only be misrepresentation and confusionism and a blow against the awareness of the masses, diverting them from their responsibility to resist the policy of surrender.

Our attitude towards the ruling régime in Egypt can be summed up as follows:

To struggle against the agent forces in power which actively endeavour to carry out the plans of imperialism and to separate them from the ruling alliance.

To push and strengthen the nationalist sections within the alliance to a position of resistance to the trend to surrender and truce which is bringing water to the mills of imperialism in the region.

Our Tasks

Guided by Marxism-Leninism, our party endeavours to foresee the course of events in the coming period and to be prepared for it.

The vicious attacks which are being planned against the gains of the working class, the peasants and the toiling masses, the spiralling rise in the cost of living, are bound to result in sharper social contradictions in town and countryside. Our party must not be taken by surprise; it must keep developments under constant review in order to face them with clarity and advocate correct policies.

The announcement of the existence of our party and the development of its activities, instead of class co-operation, will cause the ruling class to intensify its war of attrition against the democratic forces. Our party must be ready to face these blows, learning from past experiences. We must rapidly set up the basic party formations, keep strictly to security rules and carefully promote and strengthen the ideological and organisational unity of the party.

The extension of the activities of the reactionary right-wing forces and the extreme religious groups, the resumption by the Moslem Brotherhood of its organisation and activities, all this must give rise to expectations of activities towards a fascist coup. Our party must warn of such dangers, be ready to face them and resist them. It must use various means in this struggle and be prepared to act in all circumstances.

Certain sections of the ruling alliance are strongly pushing ahead towards surrender and a settlement up to the end of the road. Others innocently believe in what they call "the reassessment of American policy in the region". In such conditions, the ruling authority can reach an openly American partial settlement.

It is the duty of our party to reveal and expose such steps of the right wing.

Though the American government hesitates to announce its new policy in the region, the warning signs of this policy are clearly seen in the manoeuvres of imperialism and reaction to organise another massacre of the Palestine resistance, to promote disunity in the Lebanon and try to divide its territory by stirring up the fighting between religious and ethnic groups and increasing the Israeli attacks on south Lebanon.

The new American policy in the Middle East will change the means and tactics of the strategy of imperialism in the region. Our party must expose and reveal this reality and defeat the confusionist manoeuvres which will no doubt be undertaken by the reactionary right wing, as a preparation for this American policy before it is announced.

The position of our party towards any partial solution is a principled position: opposition to partial, separatist solutions; opposition to the recognition of Israel or the conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel, or commitments to any conditions aiming at hampering the heroic Palestinian people for the return of its rights, for self-determination on the soil of its fatherland and for the setting up of a democratic state in the liberated parts of its land.

It is likely that in the coming period the ruling authority will try to give itself a liberal image by allowing—within limits—a greater number of

platforms within the Arab Socialist Union and the publication of new newspapers. But the limits of such steps will be very narrow, limited in fact to the classes and sections which form the ruling alliance, and aiming at controlling the political movement in Egypt. Such steps must therefore not be described as democratic openings. At the same time we must not take an isolationist attitude towards them and must take advantage of them as much as possible.

A positive attitude on the part of our party will help to reveal the fraudulent nature of such measures when the régime does not allow the setting up of a platform for the forces of the left or the publication of a journal for the left, and when it gives no opportunity to the progressive forces to be of use to the country.

Our line and the forms of struggle in the coming period must not be at a higher or lower level than the degree of preparedness of the masses.

The Tasks in the Coming Period

Our party sets itself the following fundamental tasks in the coming period:

1. To reveal and expose the trends towards truce and surrender and to call the revolutionary and nationalist forces locally and on an Arab scale to struggle against the imperialist American plans and solutions.

2. To expose and oppose the tendency leading to Egypt's abandonment of her national responsibilities within the Arab national liberation movement and of her duty to play an active, positive role in the unification of the Arab progressive forces. To struggle for the improvement and strengthening of Egypt's relations with the nationalist and progressive Arab nations which stand for opposition to American imperialism and its plans in the region (Iraq, Syria, Libya, Algeria, Democratic Yemen).

In this connection, we point out the attacks of the Egyptian information services against Libya, which repeat parrot-like the whole gamut of accusations used by the imperialist services against Egypt at the time when Egypt turned away from the monopoly of military supplies and established friendly relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

At the same time, however, we must abstain from personal attacks and from calling for the downfall of the régime.

3. To actively defend the gains of the workers and peasants and to mobilise the masses against the dangers to which they are exposed and against the erosion of democratic freedoms.

4. To hasten the setting up of the alliance of the workers and peasants and of a popular forces

front, taking advantage of the favourable circumstances which will be created by the policies of the ruling authority and which will favour the broadening of the social basis of the alliance.

The setting up of the front must take place in the course of the daily struggle to achieve the demands of the popular masses and the transfer of the leadership of the trade unions and other popular organisations into militant revolutionary hands; and at the same time by a concentration of the relations between the various parts of the nationalist democratic forces and a constructive dialogue between them.

5. To endeavour to transform our party into a popular party by means of a relationship of struggle between us and the popular masses.

This is a critical time for our country, with the right wing strengthening their position in authority, with the ruling alliance giving itself the sole right to open political organisation, with increasingly vicious attacks being made on the gains of the workers, peasants and labouring masses.

Our Egyptian Communist Party has now entered the scene as the party of the Egyptian working class, peasants and working people, as the only politically organised force in the revolutionary camp. Whereas the other democratic nationalist forces continue to seek their own political organisation capable of leading their own class struggle.

Our party, which had the honour to appear as the independent platform of the Egyptian working class, thus undertakes an historic responsibility for the sake of defending our national independence and defeating plans of imperialism and local reaction; of leading the daily struggle of the working class, peasants and the working masses; of helping the progressive nationalist forces to organise their ranks and prepare for the setting up of the front of popular forces. . . .

We are confident that our comrades who have succeeded in transforming the Marxist groups in Egypt into a party of the Egyptian working class are entirely capable of continuing on the road of struggle, however great the needed sacrifices, until the final victory.

Completed from page 378

revolutionary. It is, of course, true that there are immense difficulties in becoming revolutionary for those steeped in bourgeois social theory. Yet it is important to grasp the real potential in a situation in which Marxist discussion and ideas are rapidly becoming the dominant influence within the social sciences. These are tendencies that should be assisted and encouraged, and it is therefore too early to write them off as failures.

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